

Vered Lev Kenaan



PANDORA'S SENSES

The Feminine Character of the Ancient Text

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Pandora's Senses

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Pandora's Senses

The Feminine Character of the Ancient Text

VERED LEV KENAAN

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TO ILIL,
the wonder of my life

CONTENTS

Preface ix

Introduction 3

1. Pandora's Light 17

PANDORA, ONCE AGAIN 17

THE GENEALOGY OF PANDORA 24

MISOGYNIST RESPONSES TO PANDORA 31

PANDORA'S WONDER 36

2. Pandora and the Myth of Otherness 48

FROM MOUNT HELICON TO A POETICS OF OTHERNESS 50

THE FANTASY OF SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN MEN AND GODS 56

AMBIGUITIES OF IDENTITY: THE CASE OF BROTHERS 63

THE LOSS OF SAMENESS AND THE BIRTH OF EROS 68

THE DIDACTIC IMPERATIVE: LEARN THE OTHER 73

3. The Socratic Pandora 76

WOMAN IS THE IDEAL LISTENER 77

THE NAKED TRUTH AND THE ADORNED LIE 81

THE SEDUCTIONS OF PANDORA 86

SOCRATES AND THEODOTE 90

SOCRATES AND PANDORA 96

4. Pandora's Voice and the Emergence of Ovid's Poetic Persona	103
PANDORA'S VOICE	103
FROM THE EFFEMINATE ELEGY TO THE FEMININE TEXT	109
THE EROTODIDACTIC PERSONA	114
SAPPHO'S LASCIVIOUSNESS	120
THE LASCIVIOUS TEXT	125
5. Feminine Subjectivity and the Self-Contradicting Text	131
<i>ARS AND REMEDIA</i> : METADISOURSE, LANGUAGE GAMES, AND THE PROBLEM OF SINCERITY	132
THE PALINODIC STRUCTURE	140
PALINODE AND NARRATIVE	142
PANDORA'S LIE	145
A GIRL'S RAPE AND THE BIRTH OF FEMININE SUBJECTIVITY	150
6. Pandora's Tears	161
FEMININE WEAVING: TEXT, TEXTILE, BODY, PAIN	161
HELEN'S WEB	165
LISTENING LIKE A WOMAN: PENELOPE'S TEARS	170
ODYSSEUS WEEPS LIKE A WOMAN	173
XANTHIPPE'S TEARS	176
Epilogue	187
Notes	191
Bibliography	223
Index	237

PREFACE

“Throughout his story people have knocked their heads against the riddle of femininity.” Thus Freud introduced the subject of his famous lecture of 1932. He turned to the audience and distinguished between the meanings of this riddle for his male and female listeners: “Nor will you have escaped worrying over this problem—those of you who are men; to those of you who are women this will not apply—you are yourselves the problem.”

The enigma of femininity stimulates men’s curiosity. Freud had no doubt that each of his male listeners knew what it was like to struggle with that mystery. Indeed, throughout his story femininity has been deemed a secret legacy, inciting a masculine desire to decipher the meaning of woman and to explain, and thus put an end to, this insoluble riddle.

Some feminists have criticized Freud’s seemingly stereotypical notion of woman as the object of male desire. Because he viewed woman as a riddle, he considered male desire to be a desire for knowledge—or for the unknown. This turned woman in to a sort of *terra incognita*. While she continued to play a traditionally passive role, men were the inheritors of a metaphysics of desire.

In writing *Pandora’s Senses*, I found myself thinking through and revising Freud’s gendered response to “the problem” of femininity. Being myself “the riddle,” as Freud would have it, I nonetheless find myself sharing the responses of Freud’s male listeners to the mysteries at hand. Ever since I can remember, I have been knocking my head against the riddle of femininity. One of my most significant memories from early life is connected to the figure of Eve. Our teacher called in sick one day, and there seemed

to be no one available to take control of our wild and noisy class. Suddenly a young woman teacher appeared and began to tell us the story of the apple from the book of Genesis. Imitating Eve's seductive gestures, she offered a wonderful red apple to her make-believe partner. We were immediately captivated by this powerful figure. The woman in front of us—that is, Eve—instantly turned us into silent listeners, stupefied beholders.

My early fascination with Eve, and my subsequent captivation with the wonder of Pandora, constituted a fundamental textual interaction in my biography. As I see it, it is in that mysterious moment, the moment in which woman captures the reader's imagination, the archetypal moment in which the reader is struck by the beauty of feminine appearance, that a text discovers its multifarious senses. My early readings of Eve and Pandora were connected to the text's sensual dimension—that is, to its ability to evoke the actual taste of biting into an apple, or to simulate a real sense of the danger of gazing at the dazzling Pandora. But this was only one dimension of a text that is written under the feminine spell. Like Diotima's erotic construction, the sensual effect of reading this text is inseparable from its transcendental force. In writing *Pandora's Senses* I wanted to locate the mysterious image of woman right at the center of the history of the reading experience.

I am composing this preface at Ginzburg's Café, which is located close to my home. This is where I will bring the writing of *Pandora's Senses* to a close. But this last stage of writing is where, I hope, the book will begin for you. You might be interested to know that my first ruminations about writing this text began during strolls along the Yarkon River in Tel Aviv. These morning walks on the banks of what is, in reality, not much bigger than a creek were a tremendous joy. At first, they provided me with precious moments for wondering about a possible title while, at the same time, searching for a name for my expected baby girl. And when I later became deeply engaged in writing *Pandora's Senses*, Renana's beautiful eyes were already gazing up at me from her stroller as she accompanied me on these walks. The creation of *Pandora's Senses* is thus biographically intertwined with being pregnant. I allow myself to tell you this even though that elementary feature of femininity—that is, giving birth—plays no part in the following analysis of feminine character in the ancient text. And yet maternity is certainly integral to the riddle of femininity.

The conventional academic curriculum vitae bears witness only to our intellectual progeny. It has no place for describing the significance of our biological offspring. We are allowed only to record the merits of our

published ideas. This perpetual separation between one's children and one's ideas is a painful reminder of Diotima's observation regarding the severing of an intellectual sphere of "giving birth in beauty" from a physical one. Diotima's reference to the inferior status of women as simple (earthly) birth-givers provides an important insight into the deep paradoxical essence of femininity. This paradox underlies the very existence of both men and women. That is why the irresolvable tension between being a nurturing mother and a devoted writer reverberates in so many other paradoxical structures that govern our experience. The riddle of femininity is not different from the riddle of *eros* with its sensual and transcendental duality, or the folds of meaning that the paradox of allegory conceals beneath its deceitful surface of signification.



This book is infused with the spirit of friendship of many people whose presence in my life is indispensably significant. I am certain that without them my experience of writing would have been lonely and anxious. I wish to express my love to Gordon and Jay Williams, whose generosity and encouragement are outstanding. My studies with Gordon Williams at Yale University have taught me that the work of deciphering should not take for granted the possibility of an immediate understanding; it must always proceed under a hermeneutics of suspicion. Gordon's teaching is as dear and fundamental to me as his friendship. David Konstan's analysis of *philia* and emotions in antiquity reflects a most amicable soul. I am grateful for his extraordinary friendship, wisdom, and kindness. I wish to thank Froma Zeitlin, Alison Sharrock, Sheila-Marie Flaherty-Jones, Andrew Laird, Jonathan Bernstein, Jane Barry, and Michael Zakim, who read parts of my manuscript or the whole work. Their own work, acute responses, and experience enriched me and this book. Special thanks to Patricia Rosenmeyer, the coeditor of the Wisconsin Studies in Classics, who welcomed this book and made its publication possible. I acknowledge with appreciation her crucial and constant support. Thanks to Raphael Kadushin, the humanities editor of the University of Wisconsin Press, and Maggie Hilliard, the acquisitions assistant, for their help. I wish to thank my friends and colleagues in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Haifa, and in particular Nitza Ben-Dov and Gabriel Zoran of the Department of Hebrew and Comparative Literature. I am grateful to Yossi Ben-Artzi; Benjamin Isaak, whose encouragement was vital; and also Ayelet Peer, Ittai Weinryb, and my research assistants, Sharon Meyer and Yael Nezer.

My mother and father, Ester and Dov Lev, did everything to make this period of reflection and writing possible. The memory of their devoted nurturing of my baby in the first months of her life will be ever fresh. To my second mother, Nurith Kenaan-Kedar, I want to say that her uncompromising stance on all fronts of life, her love of art, and her outstanding way of giving a company me everywhere and for ever. The bright thinking and tenderness of Lior Levy illuminate my life. My sisters, Ariela Levy and Racheli Bar-Lev, and their daughters, Lior, Efrat, Yael, and Tami, create the loveliest possible manifestation of sisterhood. I wish to thank Benjamin Z. Kedar, whose immaculate erudition is exemplary and whose originality is enlightening. Thanks to Jonathan Canaan, whose amazing musical creations are a source of joy and reflection. My close friends who read, commented, and raised excellent questions have cheered me all along the way: Yaron Senderowicz, Eli Friedlander, Noa Naaman-Zauderer, and Eli Stern; my admired and beloved friend Liora Bilsky, whose work on feminism and narrative has been inspirational and whose invigorating rhythm is always enticing; my beloved friend Michal Grover Friedlander, whose artistic and theoretical creations make life even more intriguing. Thanks to Ariel Meirav from the philosophy department at the University of Haifa, as dear to me as a brother, whose perceptive understanding in matters personal and intellectual alike is one of the most precious things I have.

The fruits of my passionate dialogue with Hagi Baruch Kenaan are present in every page of this book. His face, a home to me, makes writing an act of addressing. I dedicate this book to our first daughter, Ilil Lev Kenaan, who was born twelve years ago while we were both writing our theses at Yale University. Her beauty, wisdom, and friendship are an integral part of my investigation of Pandora's Senses.

Pandora's Senses

Introduction

The title *Pandora's Senses: The Feminine Character of the Ancient Text* follows a well-known convention in academic writing. This is a study that presents itself under a double title: a main title and a subtitle. What is the connection between Pandora and “the feminine character of the ancient text”? How can the particularity of a specific mythical figure bear on our understanding of the ancient text? What is the relationship between the enigmatic image of the first woman and the enigma lying at the heart of every text, an enigma that marks our desire for the text’s meaning?

But first, what is the relationship between a title and its subtitle? Is a subtitle subjected to its title? In what ways does a subtitle operate under its governing title? Is a subtitle merely an additional, subsidiary elaboration of a given meaning, or is it a supplement in a Derridian sense? Although Odysseus bears the name *Outis*, “Nobody,” in the cave of the Cyclops, he would not ultimately sail away before naming himself again. In the epic, the repetitive act of naming has a narratological function. The question of identity is a temporal one, and in this sense the hero’s two names never overlap. Secondary naming is never a mere supplement. In the case of Odysseus, it signifies a transition from the indistinctiveness of a name to a name that embodies an individual distinction.

Similarly, while qualifying the first title, a subtitle may also radicalize it and put it in motion. In its deferral of a title’s meaning, a subtitle is the place for an afterthought. How does secondary meaning affect an “original” meaning? Or, to put the question in the context of this book’s central image, how does the feminine (whose meaningfulness is traditionally understood as derivative and secondary) affect the already established order of texts? In *Metamorphoses*, the supplementary function of

secondary naming is examined in the context of one of Ovid's major treatments of the feminine voice. On the face of it, Echo epitomizes a repetition compulsion, a recurrence of the same through time. Yet, as readers of Ovid have observed, Echo is not a simple principle of reproduction. Anne-Emmanuelle Berger points to the description of Narcissus's utterances as sounds (*sonos*), while Echo's response takes the form of words (*verba*): "She is ready to await the sounds to which she may give back her own words" (*illa parata est / expectare sonos ad quos sua verba remittat*, *Met.* 3.377–78).¹ Feminine repetition transposes the said into a new order. It locates the immediacy of self-expression within a sphere of reflexivity. The said meets its elf in the form of that which is heard. Echo allows the speaker to identify the utterance as his own, but in objectifying the act of expression, she makes it clear that the utterance no longer belongs to its original owner. Hence, in the exchange between Narcissus and Echo, the repetition scene constitutes a locus of self-enlightenment. Narcissus asks, "Is anyone here? And 'Here'! Answered she" (*equis adest? et 'adest' responderat*, *Met.* 3.380). Echo transforms Narcissus's question into a declaration. The puzzlement in his "adest?" is resolved by her repetition. Yet the repetitive gesture that provides a positive answer to Narcissus concomitantly complicates the original narcissistic utterance. Being echoed, the solipsistic horizons of his language break open on to an irresolvable dimension of otherness. The spoken is inseparable from what is heard; the "I" cannot be understood without a "you," and the masculine is dependent on the feminine.

The subtitle of this book, *The Feminine Character of the Ancient Text*, is meant to echo the senses of Pandora in a manner that will release her name from its conventional misogynist horizons. In feminist readings of the classics, the term "releasing" has taken a methodological turn. It designates a reading that is contrasted with a strategy of critically "resisting" the masculine presuppositions that traditionally govern the formation of the ancient text. The strategy of releasing, as Patricia Salzman-Mitchell puts it (following Alison Sharrock), is a reading that will "essentially allow women's voices to speak despite the author. It is a reading of the female voice in male-authored texts as independent from the male authorial intention."² Using the term in a similar sense, my aim is to open up *Pandora's Senses* beyond the contours of the traditional image of the first woman, and to do so by relocating the myth of Pandora at the intersection of two perspectives on the field of classics: gender studies and intertextuality. This

study seeks to create a new place for Pandora in the current feminist discussion of the ancient text. By rearticulating the significance that she carries for a feminist reading, I wish to free her image from its derogatory connotations and from the marks of patriarchal construction, and show how Pandora can appear as a powerful source of inspiration.

In this sense, the present study is part of a series of current feminist readings. For these readings the path to the significance of the feminine does not remain within the bounds of a negation, a critique, or a deconstruction of the mythical constructions of gender. Yet this relatively new point of view on the ancient text could not have become part of classics without a feminist tradition whose initial goal was to resist the masculine framing of the ancient text.

In the last decades, feminist interpreters, as well as women artists, poets, and novelists, have brought about a rewriting of the classical works of the Western canon. In their readings feminists strive to make visible and to fill in the lacunae of the feminine voice, perspective, position, and identity, all of which are typically obscured in relation to masculine agency in the ancient text. Ann Bergren's rereading of Homer, for example, emphasizes the precedence of Helen's perspective.³ This implies the need to release Helen from paternalistic constructions by which her figure becomes meaningful only on the basis of her role as either the cause of the war or an object of exchange between two armies. Hence, today Helen is read, as Page duBois puts it, as an "actant" in her own life, the subject of a choice, exemplary in her desiring."⁴ As Page duBois and Jack Winkler have independently shown, this form of autonomous subjectivity, the access to a distinctively feminine experience, was already available to writers and readers in antiquity.⁵ Both duBois and Winkler exemplify the presence of feminine subjectivity in antiquity by focusing on the work of the famous poetess and refined reader of Homer, Sappho. In their respective readings of Sappho's reading of Homer, duBois and Winkler uncover a feminine perspective through which the affective dimension of Helen's subjectivity can show itself. Sappho's Helen sees things differently than Homer's Helen. And in this respect the question of "what a woman wants" calls for an understanding that cannot remain within the bounds of a man's field of vision. In a corollary manner, we may also see why Sappho provides an exemplary model for what it means to write and read poetry as a woman.

The impact of gender studies has not been limited to a recovering of hidden feminine perspectives within classical literature, but has altogether

changed the character of the classical canon. The canonical corpus of classical literature has lost the purity of its masculine identity. Again, the figure of Helen is a central focal point in the feminization of the canon. When the significance of Helen's weaving of the *Iliad* was recognized as "a narration of Helen's own story," the distinctiveness of feminine forms of representation became central to the deciphering of the epic.⁶ While mentioned by the Homeric narrator, Helen's work of art is never turned into an object of the authorial art of description. Yet once it is observed that Helen's figurative weaving provides an alternative to the authoritative perspective—an antithetical perspective—it can no longer be ignored. In presenting an uncompromising point of view on the war, one that haunts the hegemony of the authoritative narrator, Helen's woven text makes its way into the classical corpus.

Lillian Doherty's *Siren Songs: Gender, Audiences, and Narrators in the Odyssey* (1995) is a good example of how the symbolic presence of Helen as a writer of the *Iliad* becomes a general principle of interpretation. Reading the *Odyssey* as an "open" and "plural" text implies, according to Doherty, that a place must be made for the roles of female characters in the stories and for their interest in hearing stories told. In a recent study, Doherty focuses on the *Hesiodic Catalogue of Women*, traditionally read as "a text composed by men for men."⁷ Examining the masculine reception of this text, she shows how the conventional understanding of it as a genealogy of heroes covers up the presence of women in the *Catalogue's* title and neglects the fact that the text itself—albeit in a fragmentary condition—specifically takes issue with women and their desires.

Furthermore, pointing to a possible oral feminine tradition, Doherty suggests that the genealogy is a literary form that historically reflects the concerns of women. Such themes as amorous relationships, seduction, rape, and giving birth are just as central to the form of genealogies as they are to women's biography. Since women are active participants in the creation of genealogies, it is plausible to see them as active also in the narration of genealogies. But is the feminine tied to the genre of genealogy only thematically?

The idea of a genealogy, with its clear teleological linearity, may seem to emerge from a masculine, logocentric perception of the world. Yet once we consider genealogies as texts, the paradigm of linearity fails to capture the richness of the genealogical discourse, which tends to digressions, allusions to marginal affairs, and unexpected excursions. Can the feminine be seen as a textual principle embedded in the discursive form

of genealogy? And, more generally, in what ways can a discourse be said to reflect a woman's *logos*? This question brings forward the intrinsic connection between gender and textuality and leads us to a current development in feminist classical scholarship of which the present study is part.

One of the distinctive features of the current feminist project is that it goes beyond the quest of recovering feminine voices, perspectives, and identities in the ancient text and sets forth a different sort of ambition. How can the ancient construction of woman reveal the (other) nature of the ancient text? How is the feminine operative in shaping the space of ancient literature? What is the role of the feminine figure in determining the character of the intersection of myth and writing? And, finally, is feminism only a prism for understanding myth, or can it also turn to myth as a guiding source of inspiration?

Whereas feminist research has made fruitful use of classical myth as a means for sorting out the mechanisms of patriarchal hierarchies and cultural anxieties behind the historical exclusion of women, it has only gradually become aware of the empowering potential of myth for a feminist self-understanding and self-determination. This first of all calls for an elaboration of an ethical and political agenda envisioned, for example, in Amy Richlin's powerful writing. For Richlin, "the old stories await our retelling," yet the significance of such a retelling is ultimately political, part of the "battle for consciousness."⁸ Or, put in a slightly different perspective, "the future of feminist theory lies in proving what the connection is between the scholarly journals and the streets."⁹

Bracketing the discussion of the political implications of a feminist approach to classics, we may point to yet another political dimension intrinsic to a feminist reading of myth. Reading is a crucial activity for raising consciousness. And in this respect the Socratic position on the value of myth, stated in *Phaedrus* (229c–30b), provides an important reminder. For Socrates, myth can be interesting only under the sign of the Delphic imperative, only if it ultimately enables us to discover whether we really are "a more complex creature . . . than Typhon, or a simpler, gentler being whom heaven has blessed with a quiet, un-Typhonic nature."¹⁰ As myth provides a mirror for self-exploration, we may see how in reading myth we also write ourselves.

As suggested, the rewriting of myth is not only a way of deconstructing masculine perceptions or saving fractions of lost feminine experience from within the bounds of a masculine order. We not only need to release the mythical enigma of the feminine from the grip of our fathers in the

way Adriana Cavarero (1995) does to Plato or Sarah Kofman (1980) and Jane Gallop (1982) do to Freud.¹¹ Rather, we may explore how retelling the old myth enables mythical writing to mirror our concerns and thus serve as a source for constructing a tradition for feminist thinking. Hence, for example, the announced aim of the recent *Laughing with Medusa* (2006) is “to explore how classical myth has been central to the development of feminist thought.”¹²

Moreover, beyond the enigma of mythical femininity lies the more specific feminist exploration of the question of textuality, one that calls for an articulation in terms of the relationship between the figure of the woman and the enigma of the poetic utterance, between a text and its meaning. This is where the current focus on the mythical figuration of poetic inspiration as woman or goddess becomes indispensable for feminists. Why does the primal voice of poetry spring from a woman’s mouth, a Muse or a Siren? How is the divine feminine voice related to the essence of poetry? In *Cultivating the Muse* (2002), these questions are raised against the background of different literary genres.¹³ In this context, the secularization of the Muse in Roman love elegy and the complex matrix of feminine narrators in the diverse corpus of Ovid’s poetry provide, as Efrossini Spentzou (2003) and Patricia Salzman-Mitchell (2005) show, an exemplary framework for articulating the centrality of a feminine poetics.¹⁴ It is in this feminist context of reading classical myth that I would like to introduce the book’s title: *Pandora’s Senses*.

The myth of Pandora, the first woman, presents one of the most intriguing figures of femininity. The discrepancy between Pandora’s beauty and her evil dominates a long tradition of images of women from Helen to Circe and Calypso, Delilah and Salome, and on to the modern *femme fatale*, Bizet’s Carmen, Wedekind’s Lulu, and Mann’s Rosa Föhllich. It also resonates, perhaps in more complicated ways, in such figures as Madame Bovary and Anna Karenina. But while it is clear to us as readers why a Medea or a Circe is regarded as morally problematic, the evil nature associated with the prototypical woman remains vague and is always dependent on the judgmental perspectives of her ancient and modern interpreters. Is it because of Pandora’s opening of the jar that Hesiod denounces her as evil? Is it her sexuality, her seductiveness, or the deceptive nature of her sweet language? Indeed, these traits of Pandora illuminate her bad reputation. But since they are traditionally left unspecified, these traits do not allow us to fathom her evil, beyond the general understanding

that what makes Pandora evil is the very structure of sexuality, seduction, and language.

Pandora embodies an irresolvable tension that is traditionally understood as constitutive of femininity—the tension between an outer appearance and a concealed interiority. Pandora is the epitome of the twofold manner in which the feminine lends itself to the masculine gaze. While her seductive beauty displays itself as that which is seized by the eye (of men), her true nature constantly remains elusive. This elusiveness is essential to her being, yet her beauty is rendered superficial. With Pandora, appearance can no longer be a simple expression of inner nature; beauty is severed from the good. In other words, Pandora's evil is tied to a new structure of meaning that she introduces into the world of men. Pandora hides by showing. Her appearance is a form of concealment.

This study is an attempt to decipher the enigmatic image of Pandora and to do so by framing the riddle of her femininity in a new way. Our starting point is the understanding that ancient conceptions of femininity do not provide a sufficient context for interpreting the unsettling portrait of the first woman. Furthermore, the key to Pandora is to be found not in the Hesiodic image itself, but rather in its transformations and variations, in the refractions of Pandora's image within the literary discourse of antiquity. *Pandora's Senses* traces the profound impact of Hesiod's Pandora on the history of literature by deciphering the significance of this myth for interrogating the meeting point of gender and textuality in antiquity. Uncovering the strong connection existing in antiquity between images of femininity and different forms of poetics, the book argues that the fascinating figure of Pandora grounds the various ancient conceptions of the literary text.

For the important work done at the intersection of feminism and classical studies, Pandora is a clear symptom of ancient misogynist culture.¹⁵ Feminist scholars tend to think of the Hesiodic Pandora as a blight: a painful reminder of the feminine condition in antiquity. *Pandora's Senses* takes a different route. While clearly building on this feminist groundwork, it articulates a new framework for studying the prototypical character of the first woman. *Pandora's Senses* moves beyond a feminist critique of masculine hegemony, and does so in the first place by challenging the reading of Pandora as an embodiment of the misogynist vision of the feminine. The first original contribution of this study is the manner in which it liberates the myth of Pandora from the fetters of a critical focus on its misogyny.

As suggested, the figure of Pandora, as it appears in Hesiodic poetry, is often associated with traits traditionally denigrated as feminine: a

troubling beauty, otherness, seductiveness, lasciviousness, and deception. Without denying the traits attributed to her, this book shows how the significance of Hesiod's Pandora belies a one-sidedly negative interpretation. Pandora binds together the dichotomies that underlie the most fundamental aspects of the Western literary canon: beauty and evil, body and soul, depth and superficiality, truth and lie. Far more than a Hesiodic diatribe against the female sex, Pandora is first of all a sign of complexity.

Influenced by the work of Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pietro Pucci, I develop the suggestion that Pandora embodies "a principle of ambiguity"¹⁶ and, as such, is tied to the Hesiodic notion of poetry.¹⁷ In *Pandora's Senses* I elaborate this insight by showing how, starting with Hesiod, Pandora's complexity becomes a metaphor for the space of literature. Focusing on Hesiod and then on Plato, Xenophon, and Ovid, I show that her central feminine traits are transformed into key images of the mechanisms and effects of their writing. My main thesis is that Pandora embodies the very idea of the ancient literary text. She speaks in multiplicity. She is the enigma of the tension between interiority and exteriority (e.g., sign/meaning, literal/allegorical). She is the temptation of opening a mysterious container on to the depth of meaning, which, in itself, remains intrinsically elusive. In this respect, Hesiod has given us a radical conception of the feminine, one that identifies femininity with the mystery of meaning and, more importantly, understands the feminine as the grand power of signification: the movement of creation and manipulation of sense.

While studying Pandora I have often wondered why we so seldom read of her after Hesiod. Why didn't the ancient poets attempt to rewrite the Hesiodic myth? Isn't Pandora excellent material for an Ovidian spectacle, for example? The apparent occlusion of this figure after Hesiod raises the question of how such a powerful myth can disappear from antiquity's imagery. One could look for the traces of Pandora by means of a historiography of the representations of women, as Eva Cantarella (1981), Marina Warner (1985), Mary R. Lefkowitz (1986), and Ellen D. Reeder do (1995).¹⁸ In *Pandora's Senses*, however, I look for Pandora in places that have no explicit connection to the feminine. I show that her legacy was never forgotten and that her figure was very much alive at the very heart of canonical writing. Pandora will be presented here as the maternal archetype of a genealogy of writings that traditionally do not seem to belong to the same textual family. Her figure will thus be shown to be present in such central genres as the cosmological and didactic epic, the philosophical dialogue, and the Roman love elegy.

Through a series of excursions in Greek and Roman literature, this investigation will reveal the central role played by the image of Pandora in shaping the idea of a text, its meaning, and its readership. Moreover, this study brings to light the manner in which mythological figures of femininity—the feminine voice, body, craft, biography—ground the text’s mechanism and effects. *Pandora’s Senses* seeks to uncover a constitutive dimension of the ancient literary text that remains hidden precisely because it emerges from a feminine sensibility. But how is this dimension to be approached? Where in the text is it located? What kind of reading does the feminine call for?

Uncovering Pandora as a textual principle calls for an intertextual methodology. As the history of her image shows, the enigma of her character is never resolved by one definitive work of interpretation. This is at least partly because her secret is not found *in* the image itself. It is found, rather, in the relationships, links, networks, refractions, echoes, and effects through which the image of Pandora continues to show itself in the tradition—in the manner in which this image keeps on creating ever-new enigmas. To be more specific: as a textual principle, Pandora cannot be seen if we search for her by trying to arrive at the essential kernel—whatever that might be—of any given text. And, again, this is because she is not present in the unity of specific texts—in any specific text as a given unity. Instead, her presence should be looked for in the resonance of an intertextuality or in the mirror play of what Sharrock terms an intratextuality: “Reading intratextually means looking at the text from different directions (backwards as well as forwards), chopping it up in various ways, building it up again, contracting and expanding its boundaries both within the *opus* and outside it.” This kind of reading is based on the hypothesis that “a text’s meaning grows not only out of the readings of its parts and its whole, but also out of readings of the relationships between the parts, and the reading of those parts as parts, and parts as relationships (interactive or rebarbative): all this both formally (e.g., episodes, digression, frame, narrative line, etc.) and substantively (e.g., in voice, theme, allusion, topos, etc.)—and teleologically.”¹⁹

In reading intratextually, we suspend the apparent self-sufficiency of texts as substantive unities. Instead, we respond to texts primarily through the prism of the relational matrixes underlying both the internal organization and the differential individuation of these texts. Following Bakhtin and Kristeva, an intertextual reading is one that circumvents the kind of

hermeneutical space in which the act of reading is governed by the claim of an autonomous self-contained text. Intertextuality does not deny that texts take the form of unities, but it insists that the apparent unity of a text is already part of a differential matrix in which texts become meaningful through the place they occupy in the complex net of differential relations between other texts, scenes, images, and figures. As such, an intertextual reading often challenges traditional notions of authorial boundaries fixed within an individual literary corpus as well as within conventional generic categories. In the context of the present study, intertextuality opens up the possibility of exploring certain trajectories leading from Greek to Latin and then back from Latin to Greek literature by breaking up the traditional construction that forces these two fields of texts into a pre-given hierarchical relationship based on the opposition between originality and imitation. But it is first of all the character of the feminine that calls for an intertextual approach. Pandora's influence cannot be recognized in a domain of fully objectified texts because it belongs to the very shaping of the literary space within which texts take on their form. Pandora's traces should be looked for in the threads of the textile of which a text is made.

One striking example of her intertextual character is found in her emblem—in the box, Pandora's box, that remains so vivid in our literary and pictorial imaginations. As we consider the significance of this personal object, as depicted, for example, in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's famous paintings, it is important that we recall that the box was not part of the "original" Hesiodic representation of Pandora. What the first woman opens in Hesiod's version of the myth is a jar, a *pithos*.

The substitution of box for jar occurred ages later, in the sixteenth century, as Dora and Erwin Panofsky show in their important *Pandora's Box* (1956). In fact, it was Erasmus of Rotterdam who conflated the two containers in his *Adages* (1.31). According to Erasmus, the box was given as a gift to Pandora, herself a gift, by Zeus. As a beautiful and fallacious object, the box clearly provides a visual analogy to the feminine figure. Erasmus construed it as a feminine object whose beauty is deceptive, but why was it specifically a box that he associated with Pandora? Was "Pandora's box" merely the result of a mistake, a textual intervention? What is the reasoning behind Erasmus's forgetfulness of Hesiod's *pithos*, and how can the repression of the jar be connected with the surfacing of the *pyxis*? Erwin and Dora Panofsky explain this slip as a confusion between the Greek Pandora and Apuleius's Psyche. Erasmus's mistake not only covers up

Hesiod's jar; it also uncovers an interesting family resemblance that binds together two different figures, a cathexis. But is this cathexis completely coincidental? Pandora and Psyche belong to very different historical and cultural backgrounds, yet they have much in common, as is revealed, albeit unintentionally, by Erasmus. In attributing Psyche's box to Pandora, Erasmus is, in fact, tying the forbidden opening of the concealed to the promise of eternal beauty. His mistake illuminates an interesting yet unnoticed textual relationship: the deeper truth of the confusion between Pandora and Psyche is the inner connection, alive in both Greek and Latin literature, between woman and the idea of a text.

My first two chapters are dedicated to the Hesiodic Pandora. These chapters analyze the two versions of the myth as they appear in *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, aiming to uncover the manner in which Pandora's feminine traits serve Hesiod in structuring the generic character of his poetics.

Chapter 1 explores the visual significance of the feminine for the cosmological epic. Pandora is not simply an object in the world, a beautiful thing in a given visual field. She is made to be seen, and her identity is thus defined by her beholders. At the same time, she is the very force that structures the field of the visual. Her beauty stimulates the first visual experience that men have. In fact, she initiates men's capacity as beholders. The appearance of the first woman thus marks a turning point in human consciousness. The shocking effect of her sight releases mankind from its unreflecting existence in the world, opening up the possibility of a standing vis-à-vis the world and allowing humanity to differentiate itself from the universe. As I argue, Pandora's ultimate gift to humanity is the gift of wonder. And in *Theogony* she serves as the *modus operandi* for the cosmological meditation.

The textual significance of Pandora lies in the way she grounds a new kind of gaze, one that is equally necessary for reading a cosmogony. Here the meaning of her beauty is fundamental, since it is precisely her beauty that enlivens with radiance the murky and dark beginning of the world. Her central role is evident. As a miniature manifestation of the world, she helps to establish its aesthetic dimension. Pandora is the medium through which men can perceive the conglomeration of divine, natural, and conceptual elements as constituting the parts of one whole: the universe. Concomitantly, the focalizing force of her image is also significant for perceiving *Theogony* as a whole. Pandora's image provides a visualized and

encoded picture of *Theogony*, one that contains the possibility of reading it as a textual unity in the Aristotelian sense of the term.

Pandora's effect is immortalized as *thauma idesthai*, "a wonder to see." Yet the wonderful visual experience provoked by her appearance is not only pleasing; it is also shocking. Her mysterious—some would say monstrous—exterior stimulates the imagination of her beholders. Men fear her, inflamed as they are by her seductive look. I argue that this response to Pandora's threatening presence is fundamental to the reading of the didactic epic, *Works and Days*. The anxiety provoked by Pandora's appearance is tied to her status as an alien in a homogeneous community of males.

Chapter 2 concentrates on Hesiod's understanding of the feminine as a form of otherness. In being Other in a world of men, Pandora is commonly perceived as disruptive of a harmony typical of the original human condition. In contrast to such views, I argue that with the introduction of alterity, Pandora not only ruptures the revered homogeneity of mankind but, in fact, creates a heterogeneity that is necessary for the possibility of meaning. In developing this claim I examine several myths of the Golden Age—myths that, I contend, withstand the ideal of identity and sameness typically associated with them. Once we understand that such an ideal has no place in these origin myths, we can take a new look at Pandora's otherness. In a corollary manner, we need to understand how Hesiod's use of the myth of the archetypal woman enables him to locate a notion of alterity at the heart of his ethical and poetic agenda. And so, for Hesiod, the image of the feminine serves as a regulating symbolic principle: the principle of dialogue. That is to say, otherness is the intrinsic condition of a dialogic relationship. It informs the communication between a speaker and listener, teacher and disciple, and, of course, poet (namely, Hesiod) and audience.

In *Works and Days*, which seeks to regulate the ethical life by means of the marriage ideal, the dangers associated with Pandora are the motivating force of the didactic text. In the literary context of Hesiod's didactic epic and Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, men are advised to meet the feminine threat through marriage. Analogously, Pandora's threat constructs reading as a process of familiarization by which the reader becomes acquainted with the ethical demands of the text and subjects himself to the text's authority. Pandora thus supplies the contractual relationship between a text's author and its reader. The latter, who is the text's mysterious object of desire, is remolded and his anonymity is demystified as he gradually becomes, in the process of reading, the text's faithful lover.

Chapter 3 interweaves the dimensions of wonder and otherness developed in the previous chapters to show how these feminine traits are transposed into the archetypal image of the philosopher: Socrates. But what is the relationship of Pandora, the first woman, to Socrates, the exemplary philosopher? This chapter reveals the striking connection between these two figures. In response to Hesiod, Plato construes the figure of Socrates as a mirror image of Pandora: Pandora and Socrates share a deceptive appearance, and their seduction is based on a discrepancy between the visible and the invisible. But while Pandora is known as the *kalon kakon*, the one whose exterior is beautiful and interior is evil, Socrates is characterized by an ugly exteriority and a beautiful and good inwardness. That is, Pandora exemplifies the deceptiveness of appearance while Socrates represents the hiddenness of truth. I argue that these two seductive figures embody a tension that is intrinsic to what a text—any text—is. And this is because the interiority of both Socrates and Pandora is construed as a regulative idea and not as an attainable, given, content. Socrates and Pandora are images that privilege the very quest for meaning over and against any actual grasp of a determinate content.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine how the philosophical figure of the teacher of love reemerges in the context of Roman love elegy, and in particular in Ovid's amatory writing. At the center of the move from Plato to Ovid, from a metaphysical to a pragmatic discourse on love, lies, again, the question of the didactic role of the literary text. Under the sign of Pandora, both teachers, the philosopher and the poet, create texts that operate in a manner to which a notion of seduction is central.

Chapter 4 offers a new reading of Ovid's singularity among the Roman love elegists by focusing on how he defines the intrinsic relationship between femininity, love, and textuality. For Ovid, love is not integral to the natural constitution of a human being. Love is neither innate nor inborn but is, rather, a social and cultural construction created and developed in and through language and its extension into the semiotics of gesture and performative action. Ovid understands the phenomenon of love as a field of appearances that is essentially textual. But this understanding is also what traditionally subjects his teaching to moralistic criticism, echoing the common response to Pandora. How does Ovid's poetry come to terms with the accusations—also commonly directed against feminine language—of insincerity and superficiality, and even illegitimacy? I argue that the negotiation of these accusations is central to the Ovidian text. Ovid is an author who specifically elaborates the feminine traits of his

writing. Moreover, he internalizes these characteristics, making them the emblem of his poetry. Ovid rejects the conventional effeminate persona of the Roman love elegist, adopting, instead, as I argue, a feminine authorial stance influenced by the heritage of Pandora. This is done by embracing the mythical figure of Sappho as his *Musa proterva*. In Roman culture, Sappho stands for a subversive mixture of immoderate passion and excessive language. To write poetry under the influence of Sappho, as Ovid does, is to commandeer a freedom of speech that is, by definition, licentious.

Chapter 5 focuses on Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris* and aims to decipher the enigma of their palinodic structure. While *Ars* teaches its readers how to construct a love life, *Remedia* calls for a renunciation of love that is based on an understanding of love as a malaise. The juxtaposition of *Ars* and *Remedia* creates a literary puzzle that, again, brings Ovid's reliability and sincerity into question. How can Ovid's didactic position be taken seriously if his text is self-contradictory? I argue that in order to understand the Ovidian treatment of love, we need to embrace the structure of contradiction as integral to his text. More specifically, we need to understand the palinodic structure as a textual strategy that allows Ovid to elaborate a new conception of subjectivity by adopting a structure of contradiction, couched in forms of narrativity that are feminine at heart and are found in myths of virginity. Pandora's paradoxical presence as a seductive maiden thus offers the key for deciphering the text's self-contradicting effect.

Chapter 6 ties together the central themes developed in previous chapters by concentrating on the mythical image of the weaving woman, the origin of which is Pandora. The image of the weaver connects text, textile, and femininity in a manner that sheds light on what I call the *feminine sense*. What does feminine weaving signify? Myths of female weavers, such as the Homeric Helen or the Ovidian Philomela, depict weaving as intrinsic to the personal and autobiographical dimensions of women's art. The woven textile is a feminine text. It is not a disinterested representation but is soaked with the tears of its maker and intended for the tears of its beholder. Traditionally marginalized by ancient literary and hermeneutic conventions, the text's feminine sense nevertheless remained at the heart of the ancient textual experience. I show that the very attempt to exclude the feminine from the inner web of a text's "essential" meaning betrays the dependence of the ancient text on the sense of the feminine. It is only by recognizing the autonomy of the feminine sense in the ancient text that we can appreciate its vitality and didactic-therapeutic force.

Pandora's Light

PANDORA, ONCE AGAIN

In the beginning there were only men. Then came one woman. That is how Hesiod, epic poet of the eighth century BCE, conceived of the creation of humanity. In introducing Pandora, the first woman, Hesiod grounds his history of humanity in the distinction between the one and the many. Before Pandora the world is inhabited by a generic crowd of males who remain nameless and wholly unspecified. Despite the use of the term “male,” we need to notice that until Pandora’s arrival humanity was essentially composed of asexual and indistinguishable beings. As the archetype of femininity, she introduces the very dimension of difference into a homogeneous regime of sameness. This, in turn, means that Pandora was the first real individual. Her legacy is manifest in humanity’s transformation from a uniform mass into a community of gendered individuals. The present chapter explores this aspect of Pandora’s heritage, which was principally developed by Hesiod in *Theogony*. More specifically, I wish to show that while Pandora may have been a punishment—a device conceived by Zeus in revenge for Prometheus’s theft of fire—she nonetheless plays an essential role in the development of the cosmos. Perceived as a natural descendant of the erotic heritage that began with the primordial Eros and was followed by Aphrodite, Pandora embodies the ultimate stage in the development of the sensual world, the world of phenomena.

Hesiod has left us with two literary versions of the myth of Pandora. The first appears in the middle of his cosmological poem, *Theogony* (570–612), while the second version opens his didactic epic, *Works and Days* (54–105). These are singular treatments of Pandora that are unique in the

history of ancient literature.¹ As the seminal study by Dor and Erwin Panofsky has shown, Hesiod's two versions of Pandora have no rivals in the ancient texts we possess.² This absence of other Pandoras is surprising, particularly in light of the profound influence the myth has had on the misogynist tradition, on the history of images, and, as I argue in this book, on the history of literature and philosophy in general.

In this respect, Pandora is notably distinct from other mythical feminine figures such as Helen and Penelope, who, like Pandora, relate back to a (lost) oral tradition, but who have become known to us through an abundance of written versions. Their stories were frequently reshaped and retold, not only by Homer but also by numerous other ancient authors. Pandora is also to be distinguished from her mythical feminine counterparts in terms of narrative dimension. While the narratives of Helen and Penelope issue from the complexities of their life experiences, the myth of Pandora offers only an account of her creation and her delivery to Epimetheus. But the crudeness of her biography does not seem to be a result of Hesiod's neglect of other episodes in her life. Such episodes simply do not exist.³

Pandora's role is the invocation of new times. Her essence lies in the way she signals the arrival of a new form of present. Pandora's narrative constitutes a strategy for creating this new form of temporality. Her figure is a temporal marker that distinguishes an ideal past (human society without women) from a less benign present (of sexuality and procreation). Pandora is, thus, a figure that symbolizes origin rather than one that imitates a specific woman's life story.

This symbolic role reflects Hesiod's idiosyncratic interpretation of the myth of the first woman, and it might explain why the figure of Pandora was neglected by his ancient successors. But she is not just a mythical figure for Hesiod. She is also an index that allows him to construe his two poems under the sign of two generic categories. Pandora serves as the unifying principle of *Theogony* and *Work and Days*, one that, at the same time, assigns these works their generic splendor. In *Theogony* she appears as the image of the cosmos, integrating many of the cosmological themes and thus providing the means for deciphering them. In *Works and Days* her figure is again a key to understanding the overarching structure and meaning of the didactic epic. This occurs as Hesiod uses the image of the first woman as a basis for articulating his notion of a dialogic relationship—one that is essential to the didactic genre. Consequently, we may understand Pandora's central role in Hesiod's poetics as the very thing that may

have discouraged the ancient poets from revising or rewriting her story.⁴ Pandora was far too Hesiodic and far less a mythical product of oral poetry. Rewriting her would have been too blatant a challenge, unlikely to result in anything better than a duplication of Hesiod. This was something the ancient poets refused to do, just as they refused to see in the Platonic Diotima or Er standard mythical figures waiting to be revived in literary reproductions. Hesiod's Pandora remains in an antiquity purely Hesiodic, just as Diotima and Er remain purely Platonic.⁵

In beginning my analysis, it is first important to situate my reading in relation to four of the major (modern and postmodern) interpretations of Hesiod's Pandora. In so doing, I hope to explain why a new interpretation of Pandora is needed, and to acknowledge the influence of earlier studies on my work. A radical change in the reception of Hesiod occurred in the early 1970s, born of two important factors: the influence of structuralist thought on the study of Greek myth and the impact of feminist thought on classical studies. Jean-Pierre Vernant was the first to argue that Pandora was a key figure in the construction of the myth's logic.⁶ In his seminal "The Myth of Prometheus in Hesiod," Vernant reads her story as an inherent part of a sequence of episodes: the sacrifice of the ox, the hidden celestial fire, and the hidden grain.⁷ He shows that Pandora does not simply happen to be the final link in the narrative chain; she actually manifests intrinsic structural relationships with the other episodes in the myth of Prometheus. After Vernant, the myth of Pandora could no longer be read in isolation (in and of itself) as an autonomous myth. In exploring the differences between the two Hesiodic versions, Vernant offered another innovation: his focus on the analogies between them.⁸ Insisting on reading both Pandoras as complementary episodes, he emphasized the semantic levels common to both texts. This strategy reveals the complex mythological network created by Hesiod's two poems and, more specifically, the interrelated functions of the two Pandoras in construing a mythical picture of the human condition.

Vernant's innovative approach to Pandora is not directly inspired by feminist thinking, but his interpretation is clearly not foreign to the concerns that were characteristic of contemporaneous feminist approaches to the feminine.⁹ Vernant was the first to explicate Pandora's dichotomous nature, emphasizing the crucial set of tensions she embodies: between body and soul, outside and inside, lies and truth, human and bestial, as well as divine and human. Pandora for Vernant is "the symbol of the ambiguity of human existence."¹⁰ In this respect, his article paves the way for later

interpretations that expand our understanding of both the role of Pandora in Hesiodic poetics and her contribution to our understanding of the Greek notion of gender differences.

At the same time, however, Vernant's structuralist method cannot make room for the unique poetic significance of each of Hesiod's Pandoras, and he ultimately ignores the specificity of their contributions to the two poems. Vernant's primary concern with the "essence" of the mythical seems to cover up the important differences between Hesiod's two literary representations of Pandora. In other words, for Vernant she remains a linguistic or semiotic element that has a necessary function in upholding the coherence of the complex mythological matrix to which Hesiod gives voice. In this sense, her absence from the article's title is telling, as it reproduces the traditional relegation of the feminine to the realm of the insignificant, the nonessential. Dealing with Pandora under the title "The Myth of Prometheus in Hesiod" testifies clearly that in Vernant's eyes the essential core of Hesiod's myth is its male protagonist.

As Vernant showed, the two versions of Pandora in *Theogony* and *Works and Days* are closely related and together constitute the significance of "woman" as the difference between humans and gods, and as the difference between humans and beasts. Yet I think that the figure of Pandora carries a richer meaning. The first step that needs to be taken in reclaiming her full significance is to disentangle the two Pandoras from the compelling perception of them as essentially similar manifestations of the mythical conception of the human condition. By allowing ourselves to distinguish between the two versions, we make room for seeing that this figure of the feminine operates differently within the two kinds of texts in which it appears: the cosmological epic and the didactic epic.

The second crucial moment in the reception of Pandora was Pietro Pucci's *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry* (1977). While following Vernant in his rendering of Pandora as a trope of ambiguity, Pucci elaborates on this understanding by making the analogy between Pandora and the language of poetry. He focuses on the ambiguous self-presentation of the Muses in the beginning of the *Theogony*: their ability to express both truth and lies. As poetry develops, the polarity between origin (Muses) and reproduction (poet) is established. Pucci argues that the first woman operates in a similar way: subverting the unified and self-transparent origins of mankind. With Derrida's notion of "différance" in the background,¹¹ Pucci analyzes the figure of Pandora in terms of a principle of difference and negativity that generates an intricate matrix of oppositions:

We have seen that Pandora constitutes the transition from the golden age to our own corrupt time; thus, it is understandable that the text should heighten her total negativity. Like the crooked, deflecting, false, imitative *logos*, she stands at the opposite pole of what is straight, identical, and good. But here again, this separation and opposition suits only the edifying force and meaning of the text. As we have seen, Pandora functions as a "figure" and an impersonation of that imitative process which leads to sameness through differing, protracting, and deferring movement. She is, therefore, that which allows the establishment of oppositions, and in fact appears to us as both origin and the non-origin.¹²

Pandora, according to Pucci, marks a turning point in the history of humanity, one that "initiates the beautifying, imitative, rhetorical process."¹³ She marks, in other words, the emergence of rhetoric. Pucci interprets Pandora as the figure of rhetoric, underscoring her centrality to the history of writing.

A third innovative perspective on Pandora that has been crucial for the present work is found in Roma Zeitlin's 1981 "Travesties of Gender and Genre in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae*." According to Zeitlin, Pandora should be primarily understood as a paradigmatic figure of femininity. Focusing on the relationship between theatrical imitation and femininity, Zeitlin examines a family of great feminine figures of the ancient world (including Echo and Helen), arguing that Pandora stands first in the lineage of those heroines central to Greek theatricality and the Greeks' notion of imitation:

The *eidolon* [i.e., image] as a seductive objet d'art cannot be separated from the generic image of the feminine. For the "real" woman could be defined as a "real" *eidolon*, created as such from the beginning in the person of the first woman, Pandora. . . . Pandora is from the outset, in Hesiod's text of the *Theogony*, a fictive object, a copy, not an original. Fashioned at the orders of Zeus as punishment for Prometheus's deceptive theft of celestial fire for men, the female is the first imitation and the living counterpart to that original deception.¹⁴

Pandora, according to Zeitlin, is an emblem of femininity that underlies the Greek conception of imitation and mimesis. She develops this insight further in "The Case of Hesiod's Pandora,"¹⁵ analyzing two elements that are constitutive of Greek misogyny: first, the unbridgeable dichotomy

between feminine sexuality and motherhood, and, second, the prioritization of fatherhood over motherhood.¹⁶ In this context Zeitlin provides a reading of Hesiod's *Theogony* in which she suggests that the fact that Pandora is deprived of procreative powers is symptomatic of masculine anxiety regarding this natural advantage of women.¹⁷ Yet in depriving the archetypal image of femininity of the dimension of motherhood, the Hesiodic text undermines, according to Zeitlin, the very essence of femininity. This gesture of emptying the feminine of its essence is underscored by the fact that the Pandora of *Theogony* is left as a mere substitute, "only a composite imitation" of a goddess.¹⁸

Zeitlin's interpretation finds confirmation in Nicole Loraux's *Les enfants d'Athéna* (1981), which presents the Theogonic Pandora as an antithesis to the myth of the creation of man. Moreover, according to Loraux, Hesiod should be understood as making use of the myth of Pandora precisely in order to endorse the autochthonous origin of mankind:

In the *Theogony*, the first woman is her adornments—she has no body. At least, everything happens as if the text were reluctant to give her one. What, then, is woman? "The likeness of a chaste virgin" (*partheno aidōie ikelon*). Is she a "false woman"? No; rather, she is a woman because she resembles a woman—or, to be more precise, because she resembles the problematic *parthenos*. The woman is a copy of herself. An *ikelon*: the woman is an image.¹⁹

These are all compelling readings of the Hesiodic image that force us to ask the question Loraux raises: "What, then, is woman?" There is no doubt but that Hesiod's text invites nonessentialist readings. Zeitlin and Loraux both show that Pandora stands for an image, a mimesis that frustrates its beholders for lack of an original, an image that can be likened to a peel without its fruit.²⁰ Such interpretations show that the Hesiodic construction of the feminine derives from strong antifeminine concerns that have (justifiably) appalled many of Hesiod's readers. Take, for example, Page duBois's response to Hesiod:

But no matter how I think about the cultural object denoted by the classical tradition as "Hesiod," I find myself uncomfortable. And it is, of course, because I am a woman, and Hesiod seems, on the face of it, to despise my kind.²¹

Is there a way to redeem the Hesiodic text from its own misogynist constraints? I would suggest that the reading of Pandora as a copy, an image without an original, legitimate and important as it is, obfuscates other textual interests that are conjured up by *Theogony's* version of Pandora.

This chapter therefore seeks to uncover the constructive dimension of the image of the Hesiodic first woman. Pandora, as I will show, is not just a symbolic image. She is rather a vital and influential presence whose effect is transformational: through her, the world gains its significance as an object of reflection, and again, it is through her that the human is born as a *homo spectator*. Consequently, in this chapter I argue that Pandora has a crucial role in shaping the poetics of Hesiod's cosmological poem. As we shall see, she helps to establish the aesthetic dimension of the world, and as such she may be understood as the cosmological poem's main protagonist. The chapter presents the Pandora of *Theogony* as a source of enlightenment, as the paradigmatic phenomenon by virtue of which the world of appearances is born. In so doing, I wish to think of Pandora's role in *Theogony* as analogous to the role of Diotima in the *Symposium*. What has Diotima to do with Pandora? On the face of things, these two feminine figures seem to be opposites. However, their roles in their respective texts contain interesting similarities. The priestess from Mantinea is a great authority on the mysteries of love. As such, she fills the role of an erotic apostle representing the genealogy and values of Eros. Pandora's role can also be conceived of as apostolic in nature. Since, as I argue, she descends from a specific family line, one pertaining to the genealogy of Eros, her presence embodies the concept of primordial Eros. *Theogony's* Pandora marks a final stage in the evolution of the erotic principle that first emerged with the primordial Eros and continued with the birth of Aphrodite. Pandora's affiliation with the cosmic and divine family of Eros and Aphrodite is a manifestation of Eros in the human realm. This is where Pandora's illuminating force is similar to the didactic role of Diotima. Nevertheless, Pandora and Diotima have distinct ways of illustrating the erotic.

Diotima's is an outsider's voice—sacred and feminine—that penetrates the intellectual male sphere and, through the mediation of Socrates, constructs a theory of love that grounds Western thought. If Diotima is the figure who directs the human gaze away from phenomena to pure concepts, to the Platonic Idea, I would argue that Pandora employs a similar philosophical force, although, teleologically, an opposite one. In contrast to Diotima, Pandora turns the human gaze downward, toward herself, and

toward the phenomenon. The Pandora who appears in *Theogony* inaugurates the visibility of the sensible world, while she is herself the first phenomenon and the last (human) descendant of the divine erotic line.

Taking into account her deep affiliation with the visual world—being herself the human transformation of the erotic principle and the principal element of the sensible world—Pandora is no deviation from an original. She is no imitation lacking an origin. As I will show, the emphasis on Pandora's visibility does not make her into a mere externality. Nor does the fact that the Theogonic Pandora lacks a body mark her as a simulacrum. Pandora's visibility is directly linked to the essence of phenomena, to that which makes the sensible world what it is—namely, the visible world. At this point we must say more about the correlation between the feminine and the sensible.

THE GENEALOGY OF PANDORA

ταῦτά μοι ἔσπετε Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι
 ἐξ ἀρχῆς, καὶ εἶπαθ' ὅτι πρῶτον γένητ' αὐτῶν.
 "Ἦτοι μὲν πρῶτιστα Χάος γένητ'· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
 Γαί' εὐρύστερνος, πάντων ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ
 ἀθανάτων· οἳ ἔχουσι κάρη νιφόεντος Ὀλύμπου,
 Τάρταρά τ' ἱερόεντα μυχῶ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης,
 ἥδ' Ἔρος, ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι,
 λυσιμελής, πάντων τε θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων
 δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν.
 (Th. 114–22)

[Tell me this, Muses, who have your Olympian homes,
 from the beginning. Tell me which of the gods first came in to being.
 First of all, Chaos came in to being. Next
 broad-breasted Gaia, always a stable seat of all
 the immortals, who live on the peaks of snowy Olympus,
 then dark Tartaros in the innermost part of the spacious earth.
 And then Eros, who is the most beautiful of the immortal gods,
 The limb-loosener, who subjugates the mind and the good counsel
 in the breasts of all gods and humans.]²²

Eros's first appearance in *Theogony* signals the beginning of cosmological development, which is thematized as an immaterial entity, a transformative power, and a primordial element of the universe. *Theogony* ascribes

to Eros an ambiguous status. It is at once an inherent and an extrinsic element in the universe. Although Eros is ranked high in the cosmic hierarchy—introduced as the fourth (masculine) element, after Chaos (chasm and void), Gaia (earth), and Tartaros (the inner part of the earth)²³—it has an outsider's appearance. The first three elements are related by family resemblance: Chaos, Gaia, and Tartaros are dark and chthonic. Eros, however, is neither dark nor chthonic. Devoid of the material character of earth and of the spatial dimension of a void, Eros assumes a strange position in the cosmic beginning. It is a physical element of the world, but one that as yet has no bearing on the world. It is a primal, cosmic element whose contribution to the world is yet to be made.

This point, the future aspect of Eros, is a most fundamental one. As is discernible in its portrayal (*Th.* 120–22), Eros is destined to be a controversial and merciless force. However, there is no manifestation of erotic power at this primordial stage. Eros will realize its power only at a later stage of the world's development. Lacking parental lineage, itself barren, Eros is erotically ineffectual at the primordial phase. Certainly, its existence is less self-evident than Gaia's, for instance, at this point. In characterizing Eros as “the most beautiful of the immortal gods, / the limb-loosener, who subjugates the mind and the good counsel / in the breasts of all gods and humans,” Hesiod foreshadows what Eros is to become but is not yet. More specifically, Eros's superior beauty has no validity at this early stage of the world's development, since the beautiful gods have not yet been born. Eros's domination over gods and humans is likewise not yet proven.

Hesiod thus creates an abstract, intangible concept that, at best, vaguely contributes to the impregnation of the first cosmic creatures. That is why Eros is initially detached from the realm of the sensual, which means it has no erotic manifestation at all.²⁴ Eros's place in the world will become established as the world's future subjects—gods and humans—are born. But the dangerous powers ascribed to it—its ability to weaken the body and threaten the sound mind—reinforce its early subversive image as an outsider, a stranger in its own world.

The world acquires its erotic dimension only with the birth of Aphrodite (*Th.* 188–206). Aphrodite's position in the divine genealogy is also unusual, for she was born after the family of physical gods had come into being. Gaia gave birth to Uranos (sky), and together they conceived twelve children, the future Titans. Since Uranos sought to prevent the delivery of the children by physically blocking their birth, Gaia asked her youngest child, Kronos, to castrate his father. In performing this task, Kronos

brought about the separation between Gaia and Uranos as well as the desired birth of the Titans. Uranos's sexual organs were thrown into the sea, where Aphrodite was born from the mixture of sea foam (*aphros*) and the god's seed. She is, consequently, of divine descent, but not at all a conventional one.

μήδεα δ' ὥς τὸ πρῶτον ἀποτμήξας ἀδάμαντι
 κάββαλ' ἀπ' ἡπείροιο πολυκλύστῳ ἐνὶ πόντῳ,
 ὡς φέρετ' ἄμ πέλαγος πουλὺν χρόνον· ἀμφὶ δὲ λευκὸς
 ἀφρὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτου χροὸς ὥρνυτο· τῷ δ' ἐνὶ κούρῃ
 ἐθρέφθη· πρῶτον δὲ Κυθήροισι ζαθέοισιν
 ἔπλητ', ἔνθεν ἔπειτα περίρρυτον ἴκετο Κύπρον.
 ἐκ δ' ἔβη αἰδοίῃ καλῇ θεός, ἀμφὶ δὲ ποίῃ
 ποσσὶν ὑπο ῥαδινοῖσιν ἀέξετο· τὴν δ' Ἀφροδίτην
 ἀφρογενέα τε θεὰν καὶ εὐστέφανον Κυθήρειαν
 κικλήσκουσι θεοὶ τε καὶ ἄνδρες, οὐνεκ' ἐν ἀφρῷ
 θρέφθη· ἀτὰρ Κυθήρειαν, ὅτι προσέκυρσε Κυθήροισι·
 Κυπρογενέα δ', ὅτι γέντο περιλύστῳ ἐνὶ Κύπρῳ
 ἡδὲ φιλομμηδέα, ὅτι μηδέων ἐξεφάνθη.
 τῇ δ' Ἔρος ὠμάρτησε καὶ Ἰμερος ἔσπετο καλὸς
 γεινομένη τὰ πρῶτα θεῶν τ' ἐς φύλον ἰούσῃ.
 ταύτην δ' ἐξ ἀρχῆς τιμὴν ἔχει ἡδὲ λόγῳ
 μοῖραν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι καὶ ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι,
 παρθενίους τ' ὀάρους μειδήματά τ' ἐξαπάτας τε
 τέρψιν τε γλυκερὴν φιλότῳ τε μελιχίῳ τε.
 (*Th.* 188–206)

[But the sexual organs, when Kronos first cut them off with his steel and threw them from the mainland into the stormy sea—for a long time they drifted on the sea, and white foam started circling around the immortal flesh. And in it a young woman began to grow. First she came to sacred Kythereia, then she reached the sea-washed Kyprus, and there she stepped out, a respectful and beautiful goddess. And around her slender feet the grass grew. And Aphrodite, the *aphros*-foam goddess, and the beautifully garlanded Kythereia, gods and men name her, because she was born from the *aphros*. And Kythereia, because she had come to Kythereia. And Kyprogeneia, because she was born in sea-washed Kyprus.

And sex-loving Philomeidea, because she appeared from the sexual organs.
 Eros accompanied her and beautiful Himeros attended her
 when she was born and as she joined the community of the gods.
 From the beginning she has this sphere of influence and responsibility
 over men and the immortal gods:
 maidens' conversations, smiles, tricks,
 sweet delight, and gentle love.]

Aphrodite is the first divine figure to realize the worldly destiny of the cosmological Eros. She is the first among the gods to expose the world to its own erotic structure. Not only is Eros invoked at Aphrodite's birth, but it also now loses its remote status, being immersed in the divine appearance of the erotic goddess. Eros's reappearance in *Theogony* marks the midpoint in the development from the erotic concept (primordial Eros and its embodiment in the divine figure of Aphrodite) to the erotic phenomenon (Pandora). In order to become a productive and sensual power, Eros needs the persona of Aphrodite. The abstract beauty of Eros needs to be reflected in the concretely beautiful form of the goddess in order to emanate through her. Aphrodite is a medium for the ineffectual primordial Eros. As a goddess belonging to the reign of the Olympians, Aphrodite's divine duty is to specify the erotic field of experience, marking it as her own area of expertise and responsibility. She thus earns her divine authority as a personification of the primordial Eros, just as Zeus comes to manifest and represent the heavenly realm (Uranos) and Hades the underworld (Tartaros). With the distribution of the divine parts of the world among them, the Olympian gods determine the ethical function of the primordial cosmic elements, which then, under the Olympic tutelage, become signifiers of values and of other aspects of human life.

Aphrodite spurs a concretization of the world and contributes to its maturation as a sensual being. When this happens, Eros assumes a new position, losing its indifferent, abstract appearance in response to Aphrodite's divine form. The erotic principle thus becomes integrated into the feminine domain of Aphrodite. As we shall see, the creation of the first woman will bring to its conclusion this process of associating the erotic with the feminine. Let us first, however, focus on Eros's second appearance and its relation to Aphrodite. Following her birth, Aphrodite is accompanied by two subordinates, Eros and Himeros.²⁵ By means of an alliteration, Hesiod presents the two subordinates as a pair whose role is to resonate and accentuate the meaning of Aphrodite. Being thus duplicated, Eros and

Himeros together create the emotive force. This collaboration is reflective of the change that Eros's former eccentricity has undergone; it is now a part of the family of affects. Aphrodite's other names, Kyprian or Kytherea, and the sex-loving Philomeidea, similarly manifest a manifold appearance (*Th.* 198–200). The various names of the goddess and her attendants generate a family of terms that display the variegated significance of the erotic field. This specification and naming of the different divine forces is also indicative of the concretization the world has undergone.

But how are Eros and Himeros related to Aphrodite? In *Cratylus* 419b Plato suggests that the erotic terms *eros* and *himeros* stem from the same verbal root, *rhei*, meaning “flowing.”²⁶ Plato's reference to the fluidity of *eros* and *himeros* recalls the substances of which the Hesiodic Aphrodite is made. One might think of her three engendering liquid elements—the seawater, sea foam, and semen—as the matter that the fluidity of Eros and Himeros, as Plato understands them, puts into motion. But regardless of how fancifully Plato plays with etymology, his linguistic game converts *eros* and *himeros* to the Hesiodic image of Aphrodite and thus reestablishes their family resemblance. Eros and Himeros are not, consequently, the same as Aphrodite; rather, they are her driving forces. They are related to Aphrodite as passion is to beauty.²⁷

As noted above, the liquid materiality that is Aphrodite does not remain formless. Not only does she grow up to become a radiantly beautiful young woman, a *koure* (*Th.* 191, 194), but she also locates her two masculine companions in a new semantic field: the field of femininity.²⁸ The world had already been exposed to one important feminine manifestation before the birth of Aphrodite. This was the figure of Mother Earth, Gaia, the first personified cosmic principle.²⁹ She becomes angry at her offspring-husband, Uranos, who prevents the delivery of their children. The wish to rescue her children from her dark belly coincides with her will to power. This leads to the scheme of castrating Uranos, which is carried out by her youngest child, Kronos. Gaia's conniving and castrating methods are a conspicuous celebration of the way she performs motherhood. But it is only with Aphrodite that the erotic facet of womanhood begins to develop.

Aphrodite creates the field of femininity by specifying feminine characteristics and behavior. This prepares the way for the creation of woman. In light of the description of Aphrodite's divine authority (*Th.* 205–6), she is also understood to be the divine role model for her future descendant, the first woman. Aphrodite is granted precedence “over maidens' conversations [*oarous*],³⁰ smiles [*meidemata*], tricks [*exapatas*], / sweet delight

[*terpsin te glukeren*], and gentle love [*philoteta meilichien*].” All these seductive features are characterized by Aphrodite as essentially feminine. Their linear order schematizes the outlines of feminine erotic behavior. Female conversations are centered on secret passions.³¹ As these passions are exchanged and exposed, they intensify, inciting a desire to fulfill them. Smiles, tricks, and delight are the methods of feminine seduction. The woman communicates her passion through facial gestures (smiles), verbal gestures (tricks), and a beautiful appearance (sweet delight). This is then followed by the final stage of the erotic endeavor, which is fully accomplished by soft intercourse (gentle love).

This phenomenology of gentle erotic conduct is radically separated from the violent and merciless characterization of the primordial Eros. It thus marks the transition from the abstract Eros that pertains to the austere cosmic beginning to the feminine embodiment of Eros and its new position in the culturally sublimated world. Although born of the inhumanly violent act of castration, Aphrodite's gentle figure obliterates any signs of this brutal origin. Her feminine persona provides a divine refiguration of human sexuality. More precisely, Aphrodite hands over the primary responsibility for human sexuality to women.

Aphrodite underlines the dependence of the feminine erotic presence on interpersonal relationships. Feminine sexuality operates within the interpersonal field, the space created between the one who sees and the one who is seen, between the seducer and the seduced. In emphasizing Aphrodite's responsibility for dialogic relationships, Hesiod establishes the connection between femininity, sexuality, and visibility. Aphrodite promotes the feminine figure into a sexual being because she defines feminine erotic existence through interactions with others: smiling at, seducing, and touching men. Thus, Aphrodite introduces seeing and being as constitutive elements of sexuality. In other words, she shows that visibility is an indispensable feature of the erotic field.

The connection between the erotic and the visible is important for understanding cosmic development. The relationship between the erotic and the visible was vaguely alluded to earlier in the poem in its reference to the beauty of primordial Eros. This was only a vague allusion because the primordial erotic principle is formless and, consequently, invisible. Only the beautiful form of Aphrodite makes visibility an aspect of the erotic and thus marks a new stage in the cosmological development. Her birth introduces beauty and visibility into the world. Her divine influence is manifest in making visibility a part of life. With her birth, the world is

ready to make the passage from the intangible stage of the cosmos to the sensual stage of appearances. The divine contribution of Aphrodite to the sensual aspect is followed by the appearance of the first woman. Primarily understood as a feminine asset, sexuality assigns women predominance over the realm of phenomena—that is, the visible sphere. Since the feminine, being under the divine influence of its beautiful patroness, Aphrodite, represents the visible world more than the masculine does, femininity is, in fact, the pronouncement of the erotic phenomenon. And so the ultimate stage of the erotic process that began with the invisible force of Eros and culminated in the maturation of the sensible world is marked by the creation of the ultimate phenomenon, the first woman.

Although Aphrodite is not directly responsible for Pandora's creation,³² she is certainly expected to be her patroness, being the goddess of that sexuality she has constructed as essentially feminine. While Aphrodite thus serves as Pandora's role model, Pandora's appearance is a realization of the erotic codes established by her divine patroness.³³ Shared features show that, on a semantic level at least, Pandora is a direct descendant of Aphrodite.³⁴ Both are young and beautiful feminine figures chiefly characterized by their sexuality rather than by motherhood. Moreover, Pandora is a necessary extension of Aphrodite because, without her, the goddess cannot fulfill her divine responsibility. Together they initiate the genealogy of the feminine race. Each, however, has a distinct role. One is the patroness of sexuality and femininity. The other is the actual model for all women, defining the essence of the feminine existence. Pandora is, in this sense, a bridge, for she continues the line from the divine Aphrodite to woman-kind.³⁵ Her significance is born of the intersection between femininity, sexuality, and visibility, this being the paradigmatic feminine phenomenon. Pandora appears as the final link in the erotic development of the cosmos, which begins with the primordial erotic principle and continues with its concretization in the divine Aphrodite. Pandora brings the erotic genealogy to its culmination, providing a human embodiment of Aphrodite. Following in the footsteps of her divine patroness, she makes her contribution to the maturation of the phenomenological world.

This signal contribution by Pandora to the cosmic order is not openly acknowledged by the text of *Theogony*. On the contrary, Hesiod makes an effort to prove the opposite—namely, that Pandora is a sign of human degeneration. Moreover, although the logic of erotic development suggests that her creation should immediately follow the birth of Aphrodite, Hesiod chooses instead to insert the Pandora episode in a later stage of

the cosmological narrative. This postponement, in fact, leads to another role and meaning for Pandora. Indeed, one of the complexities characteristic of this poem is its simultaneous suggestion of varied storylines. Our interpretation of Pandora as an indispensable element of the sensible world will have to grapple, for instance, with the more common view of her as a superfluous addendum, a blemish, whose purpose is to remind the human race of its own imperfection and inferiority.

My argument is that *Theogony* creates a double role for Pandora. She is at once an inherent part of the erotic development that brings the sensible world to full maturation and, at the same time, an artifice: a cunning device and a divine punishment. Although neither of these roles ultimately precludes the other, their coexistence demands an explanation. The poem consequently contains two levels of expression. On the one hand, the text constitutes an outspoken expression of traditional misogynist forms of thought. On the other hand, it produces a reversed notion of the feminine. Hesiod's misogynist presentation of Pandora, in other words, is rivaled by an alternative and pathbreaking notion of the feminine that is concomitantly developed by Hesiod's text. *Theogony* allows us to see the destructive image of Pandora as simultaneously the source of humanity's transformation from indistinguishable beings into self-reflecting individuals. This is the sense in which I read *Theogony* as a concealed eulogy of the feminine. How does a text produce two radically different pictures of the same phenomenon?

MISOGYNIST RESPONSES TO PANDORA

Ignoring the logic of erotic development, as noted above, Hesiod delays Pandora's creation until the middle of the poem (*Th.* 570–612). Following Aphrodite's birth, *Theogony* provides accounts of numerous divine births and genealogies that collectively result in the creation of the Olympian family (453–506). In enumerating the various gods and their descendants, the text explicates the development of the cosmos, following the process by which the world became a concrete place. After the birth of Zeus and his Olympian siblings, however, the successive births come to a halt, and the text now focuses instead on the glories of Zeus's rule and on his cosmic responsibilities. A turning point in the text occurs when Zeus overrules his father, Kronos. This development is followed by a description of the relationship between Zeus and Prometheus (507–69). Prometheus seeks to defend the standing of humans under Zeus's regime, while Zeus responds by making their condition harsher. Zeus conceals from men the

fire that is their source of light and warmth, leading Prometheus to steal a flaming grain from the hidden fire and bring it back to them. Zeus, enraged, immediately responds by creating the first woman.³⁶

At this point, Hesiod intensifies his poetic style. The description of the Pandora figure diverges from his earlier descriptions—the static, detached portrayal of Eros or the solemn account of Aphrodite. The new and striking embodiment of Eros in the human realm inspires a subjective form of expression. More to the point, the passage following Pandora's creation (571–84) signals a disruption in Hesiod's austere, condensed style. The language becomes emotional and excited (585–612). Clearly, the detailed construction of the erotic field as part of this new female figure is no longer detached from the narrator's own life experience. Indeed, this tender maiden, newly introduced to the world, causes the narrator to embark upon a bitter lamentation about the miserable condition of humanity. The Pandora episode consequently consists of two parts, which we will consider separately: the making of Pandora and the responses to her creation.

"At once, in return for the fire, he produced an evil thing for humankind," the narrator ominously remarks (570). Nevertheless, the succeeding depiction of Pandora's creation (571–84) does not elaborate on the meaning of the aforementioned evil. In fact, this passage, which recounts the creation of the female, makes no connection between the newly fabricated female image and its disastrous implications for the world of men. As we shall see, Hesiod's misogynist remark functions as part of a rhetorical strategy, catching the reader by surprise. In itself, the divine creation of the beautiful maiden does not reveal the tragedy the author has already inscribed for the male reader's life. The depiction of her creation leaves open the question of the origin of evil, making those who respond to her image (including the readers) responsible for resolving it. In other words, the image of Pandora itself is blameless. Rather, it is the interpretations of and responses to this innocent image that charge it with evil. Traditional misogyny is consequently reproduced anew each time by readers who interpret the beautiful image of the first woman as a harbinger of evil. We need to ask ourselves, then, why responses to the first female image assigned it such evil connotations. We need also to inquire into the meaning of the term "evil" (*kakon*) intended by the text. Here is the first part of the Pandora episode:

Αὐτίκα δ' ἀντὶ πυρὸς τεύξεν κακὸν ἀνθρώποισιν·
γαίης γὰρ σύμπλασσε περικλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυήεις

παρθένῳ αἰδοίῃ ἵκελον Κρονίδεω διὰ βουλᾶς.
 ζῶσε δὲ καὶ κόσμησε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη
 ἀργυφὴν ἔσθῃτι· κατὰ κρήθεν δὲ καλύπτρην
 δαιδαλέην χεῖρεσσι κατέσχεθε, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι·
 ἄμφι δὲ οἱ στεφάνους, νεοθηλέος ἄνθεσι ποίης
 ἱμερτοῦς περίθηκε καρήατι Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη.
 ἄμφι δὲ οἱ στεφάνην χρυσέην κεφαλῇφιν ἔθηκε,
 τὴν αὐτὸς ποίησε περικλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυῆις
 ἀσκήσας παλάμησι, χαριζόμενος Διὶ πατρί.
 τῇ δ' ἐνὶ δαίδαλα πολλὰ τετεύχατο, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι,
 κνώδαλ', ὅς' ἥπειρος δεινὰ τρέφει ἡδὲ θάλασσα,
 τῶν ὅ γε πόλλ' ἐνέθηκε — χάρις δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἄητο—
 θαυμάσια, ζῴοισιν ἐοικότα φωνήεσσιν.
 (Th. 570–84)

[At once, in return for the fire, he produced an evil thing for humankind. For the famous lame god molded out of earth the image of an honorable maiden as the son of Kronos willed. And the gray-eyed goddess Athena girded and adorned her with a silvery dress, and down from her head she spread with her hands an embroidered veil, a wonder to see; and around her head Pallas Athena laid desirable garlands, flowers of a fresh-budding field. Around her head she put a golden crown that the famous lame god elaborately made himself with his own hands to please his father, Zeus. On it he lavished many carefully wrought things, wonderful to see: terrible wild creatures reared up on land or sea, wonderful things, like living beings with voices, and upon all of them he breathed charm.]

Hesiod's programmatic statement (570), which prefaces this description and announces that we are to witness the construction of "our" human destruction, is far less clearly elaborated here than it is in his other version of Pandora in *Works and Days*.³⁷ In *Theogony*, the cardinal moment in which Pandora is identified with evil occurs as the female image is gazed upon. That is, the actual process of creation does not reveal evil in intentions on the part of her makers. Only once the feminine model is completed and the image is revealed to the divine and human assembly is it given a signification:

Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τεύξε καλὸν κακὸν ἀντ' ἀγαθοῖο,
 ἐξάγαγ', ἔνθα περ ἄλλοι ἔσαν θεοὶ ἡδ' ἄνθρωποι,

κόσμῳ ἀγαλλομένην γλαυκώπιδος ὀβριμοπάτρης.
 θαῦμα δ' ἔχ' ἄθανάτους τε θεοὺς θνητοὺς τ' ἀνθρώπους,
 ὡς εἶδον δόλον αἰπύν, ἀμήχανον ἀνθρώποισιν.
 (*Th.* 585–89)

[But after he had completed this beautiful evil, in return for the good, he led her out to where the other gods and men were, adorned with the apparel of the gray-eyed daughter of the mighty father. Wonder seized the immortal gods and mortal men as they saw the fatal deceit, for which men have no remedy.]

This passage depicts not only the creation of the first woman, but the creation of the first work of art as well. The presentation of the image to the public weds the two actions of seeing and condemning. How does this happen exactly? Does the response mean that beauty, simply by appearing, must allure, seduce, and divert us from goodness? Does this text advance a conception of sinful beauty? We will postpone this question for now. Instead, we notice that Hesiod identifies seeing with foreseeing. Gods and men both look at something completely new, grasping it (as is characteristic of this proleptic text) as a sign of what is not yet there. That is, they see what they see as if they were already in the future. Before further examining the spectator's mode of seeing, let us briefly attend to the narrator's entangled perspective:

ἐκ τῆς γὰρ γένος ἐστὶ γυναικῶν θηλυτεράων,
 τῆς γὰρ ὀλῳίον ἐστὶ γένος καὶ φύλα γυναικῶν
 πῆμα μέγα θνητοῖσι μετ' ἀνδράσι ναιετάουσιν,
 οὐλομένης πενίης οὐ σύμφοροι, ἀλλὰ κόροιο.
 ὡς δ' ὁπότεν ἐν σμήνεσσι κατηρεφέεσσι μέλισσαι
 κηφῆνας βόσκει, κακῶν ξυνήονας ἔργων
 αἱ μὲν τε πρόπαν ἡμᾶρ ἐς ἥλιον καταδύντα
 ἡμάτια σπεύδουσι τιθεῖσιν τε κηρία λευκά,
 οἱ δ' ἔντοσθε μένοντες ἐπηρεφῆας κατὰ σίμβλους
 ἀλλότριον κάματον σφετέρην ἐς γαστέρ' ἀμῶνται.
 ὡς δ' αὕτως ἀνδρεσσι κακὸν θνητοῖσι γυναικῆας
 Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης θῆκε, ξυνήονας ἔργων
 ἀργαλέων· ἕτερον δὲ πόρεν κακὸν ἀντ' ἀγαθοῖο·
 ὅς κε γάμον φεύγων καὶ μέρμερα ἔργα γυναικῶν
 μὴ γῆμαι ἐθέλη, ὅλοον δ' ἐπὶ γῆρας ἵκηται

χήτει γηροκόμοιο, ὃ γ' οὐ βίότου ἐπιδευῆς
 ζώει, ἀποφθιμένου δὲ διὰ ζωὴν δατέονται
 χηρωσταί· ὧ δ' αὖτε γάμου μετὰ μοῖρα γένηται,
 κεδνὴν δ' ἔσχεν ἄκοιτιν ἀρηρυῖαν πραπίδεςσι,
 τῷ δέ τ' ἀπ' αἰῶνος κακὸν ἐσθλῷ ἀντιφέρειζι
 ἔμμενές· ὅς δέ κε τέτμη' ἀταρτηροῖο γενέθλης,
 ζώει ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἔχων ἀλίσστον ἀνίην
 θυμῷ καὶ κραδίῃ, καὶ ἀνήκεστον κακὸν ἔστιν.
 (Th. 590–612)

[For from her comes the race of women and females. From her comes the destructive race, the tribes of women, a great calamity to mortals; they do not dwell with men as companions in times of cursed poverty, but in plenty. As in vaulted hives bees feed their drones, partners in evil things—the bees work hard all day long from dawn to setting sun and lay down white combs, while the drones stay in the sheltered hives and collect the labor of others for their own bellies—even so Zeus thundering on high created women as an evil for mortal men, doers of grievous works. And he gave another evil, as the price of good: whoever, avoiding marriage and the troubles women cause, does not marry, he reaches deadly old age without anyone to care for him, and though he does not lack means while he lives, his kinsmen divide up his property when he dies. But for him whose lot is marriage, and who has a dutiful wife suited to his ways, evil ceaselessly fights with good in his life; if he should get pestilent children, the grief in his heart and soul is unremitting throughout life: this evil has no cure.]

Pandora is made to carry the feminine responsibility for human misery. Yet this harsh Hesiodic conclusion cannot be inferred from her initial appearance as an innocent and inexperienced maiden. In order to bridge the gap between the benign origin and the present state of things, we need to establish a relationship between the narrator's response to women and the mythical response of the immediate audience to the first female image. It is significant that *Theogony's* denunciation of women is grounded in a chain of horrified responses toward the female. In fact, in a cunningly gradual process, the text loads the feminine image with different meanings. We can trace this progress of signification, together with the intensification of the metaphoric reactions toward her stunning image.

First, the initially innocent expression, "image of an honorable maiden" (*partheno aidōie ikel on*, 572), is replaced in the viewer's response to the

female image with the dangerous connotation of “beautiful evil” (*kalon kakon*, 585) and “fatal deceit” (*dolon aipyn*, 589). Next, Hesiod’s moralizing account adds another collection of dreadful meanings: “destructive race” (*oloion ge nos*, 591), “a great calamity” (*pema me ga*, 592), and the complex drone simile (594–601). Addressing the feminine model metaphorically reenacts the dressing of the first woman with beautiful clothes and adornments. It is only at this point, and for the first time in *Theogony*, that Hesiod names this object of art as literally the first woman. This is the origin of the race of women, *genos gynaikon* (590).

The naming of the first woman occurs while the spectators and the readers are gazing at her. The name “Pandora” is thus tied to her visibility, indicating that visibility is the essence of woman. Visual appearance is the mark of the feminine. The appearance of the first woman incites responses that turn to metaphorical language in order to capture its meaning. In other words, the meaning of the word “woman” derives from the idiomatic and imagistic responses that Pandora’s beauty invokes.

As a ready noticed by numerous readers, Pandora is the first work of art, the first product of manufacture, and the first manifestation of *technē*, as opposed to *physis*. Even more importantly, *Theogony* introduces through the making of Pandora the very experience of objectification. The presentation of Pandora as an object of art results in an ekphrasis, which, by virtue of its rhetorical quality, creates two portraits: that of the object (the creation of Pandora), and that of the act of gazing at the object (the responses to Pandora). Hesiod delineates the object’s visibility and thereby allows us to encounter a phenomenon in its pure essence, through its appearance. This confrontation with appearance has a central role in establishing the meaning of the cosmological poem as a whole.

PANDORA’S WONDER

One of the more conspicuous elements in the Pandora episode is the recurrent use of *thauma*, “wonder.” The term appears first in the section that describes the creation of the first woman and then reappears in the passage that focuses on the audience’s response to her:

At once, in return for the fire, he produced an evil thing for humankind. For the very famous lame god molded out of earth the image of an honorable maiden as the son of Kronos willed. And the gray-eyed goddess Athena girded and adorned her with silvery dress, and down from her head she spread with her hands an embroidered veil, *a wonder to see*; and around her

head Pallas Athena laid desirable garlands, flowers of a fresh-budding field. Around her head she put a golden crown that the famous lame god elaborately made himself with his own hands to please his father Zeus. On it he lavished many carefully wrought things, *wonderful to see*: terrible wild creatures reared up on land and sea, *wonderful things*, like living beings with voices, and upon all of them he breathed charm.

But after he had completed this beautiful evil, in return for the good, he led her out to where the other gods and men were, adorned with the apparel of the gray-eyed daughter of the mighty father. *Wonder* seized the immortal gods and mortal men as they saw the fatal deceit, for which men have no remedy. (*Th.* 570–89, my emphasis)

As we have already noted, the crux of this episode is encapsulated in the response to it. In this case, the primordial spectator's response to the image is the most revealing. The audience is said to be seized by wonder. This response could be explained in terms of an aesthetic experience evoked by looking at a beautiful masterpiece. However, Hesiod makes "wonder" a synonym for "fear." The audience is seized with wonder because it sees a fatal deceit. In other words, gods and men alike are shocked by the effect of charming beauty, which they recognize as a source of danger. Why is this beauty dangerous? First of all because it is new: the first feminine model signals a break with routine; it announces an end to old times. Gods and men respond as if they were old-fashioned country folk encountering a modern invention for the first time. New technologies, as we know, provoke anxiety and resistance, even hatred. But why was the first woman so foreign to the human world? Why was this beauty so alien to the human world? In order to understand the significance of Pandora's striking beauty, we need to think about it in relation to other striking phenomena in *Theogony*. As we will see, Pandora's unique significance is related to the structure and design of the specific narrative strategy that positions her story precisely in the middle of *Theogony*.

PANDORA IS THEOGONY'S CENTER

The Pandora episode divides the cosmological poem into two parts.³⁸ This is an interesting editorial choice. The complicated narrative of successive births creates what one interpreter has called "a structureless mess."³⁹ And yet this mess has an order of sorts, one that enables us to draw out a linear narrative. That narrative is the history of the hegemony of Zeus. The general outlines of this story are already known before Pandora's

appearance (104–506): Zeus's supremacy is established with the castration of his grandfather, Uranos, which is then followed by Zeus's ascendance over his father, Kronos. The poem celebrates the victory of the son over his father when Rhea, Zeus's mother and Kronos's wife, replaces baby Zeus with a stone. Zeus, who was otherwise destined to be swallowed by Kronos, grows up safely under his grandmother Gaia's care. Deceived by his wife's trick, Kronos swallows the stone and then vomits it up along with his previously swallowed children. When Zeus eventually ascends to the throne on Olympus, he commemorates the event by turning the stone that saved his life into a *sema*, a sign signifying the victory over his father (492–506).

Though the story might have ended here, having explained Zeus's ascendancy,⁴⁰ it continues with a grave intermezzo on the conflict between Zeus and Prometheus, culminating in the creation of the first woman (507–616). The next section, the second half of the poem (617–1022), includes, among other events, two crucial episodes describing the intensification of Zeus's power: the battle between the Olympians and the Titans, and Zeus's combat with the monstrous Typhoeus. Both episodes are digressive because they recount events leading to the supremacy of Zeus, which has already been established in the poem. The battle between the Olympians and the Titans is a particularly conspicuous digression, since it is already mentioned in the account of the *sema* that Zeus installed in Delphi as a monument to his supremacy.

However, the second half of the poem is not simply an extended postscript. In this part of the poem, the physical world reaches its final stages of development specifically through these two important battles indicative of Zeus's authority.⁴¹ But if the final form of the physical world is not established until the second half of the poem, why are the Prometheus intermezzo and the Pandora episode placed in the middle of the text, rather than in their rightful (later) place in the chronology? Pandora, as we know, was not created until after the succession of various divine births and struggles, and only after the birth of men. Why is this glimpse of the human world inserted into the account of the still-incomplete physical world? Although *Theogony* consistently treats the subject of cosmogony in relation to human experience, the centrality of the first woman in the text requires more than a chronological explanation. How, then, can we explain the central position of her story? As we shall see, the episode of the first woman plays a central role in determining the poetical ambitiousness of the text and its ethical function.

FEMININE BEAUTY AND THE BEAUTY OF THE UNIVERSE

To appreciate the significance of Pandora's insertion in to the middle of the poem, we need now to return to the beginning of the cosmological narrative. The initial state of the physical world is a meager one. Four elements constitute an inconceivable existence, a universe that is dark and largely intangible. The physical development that follows brings the cosmological picture into focus. The world begins to look like the world we know, crossed with rivers and mountains, sea, a sky overhead, a sun and a moon. During the series of births giving rise to the sensible world, we do not grasp the cosmic outcome as a whole. Nor are we told that it is a beautiful or a good thing. We are hardly given any notion of the beauty of the universe's particulars.⁴² Contrast the absence in the Hesiodic cosmology of any unified picture of the universe with the biblical and Platonic accounts of creation. In the book of Genesis and in *Timaeus*, the world has a divine creator, a demiurge or a caring father, who desires that his world be good. The God in Genesis rejoices upon viewing his world, as inferred from the Hebrew formulaic idiom concluding each of the six days of creation: "And he saw that it was good" (*va-yar ki tov*). God's final evaluation, made on the sixth day, refers to the "all," the whole of his creation: "And god saw *all* he has done and that it is very good" (Gen. 1.31, my emphasis). In *Timaeus*, this unnamed "all" is called *cosmos*: "For the world is the best of things that have become, and he [the demiurge] is the best of causes" (*Tim.* 29). Although good (*tov*) in Genesis is grasped through a divine eye, emphasis is placed on the visibility of the world, which satisfies its beholder and maker. In *Timaeus*, too, the world's goodness is related to, and even derives from, its pleasant appearance (cf. *Tim.* 29 and 92c).

Hesiod's poem, in contrast, emphasizes the terrible and gloomy aspects of the cosmos. Toward the end of the poem, and in anticipation of the last stage of evolution, the first elements of the cosmos are once again invoked, this time in order to create a picture of the whole world for which, as M. L. West remarks, "no single expression yet existed."⁴³

ἔνθα δὲ γῆς δνοφερῆς καὶ Ταρτάρου ἡρόεντος
 πόντου τ' ἀτρυγέτοιο καὶ οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος
 ἑξείης πάντων πηγαὶ καὶ πείρατ' ἔασιν,
 ἀργαλὲ' εὐρώεντα, τά τε στυγέουσι θεοὶ περ·
 (*Th.* 736–39)⁴⁴

[There dark ear th and gloomy Tartaros, barren sea and starry sky, all have their roots and farthest edges, side by side in or der. It is a g loomy r egion that even gods abhor.]

While this picture is linked to the description of the despicable underworld, it is distinctive in the way it conveys, for the first time in *Theogony*, a notion of cosmic unity. And yet this call for a unity—an invocation to recognize an object as a whole—is to be found earlier in the text as well, when the first woman is presented before the assembly of gods and men. In contrast to the physical world, Pandora has a creator, and her creation is teleological. She is, first of all, the product of the thoughts of Zeus, who is otherwise not directly responsible for forming the cosmic elements. But while thus differentiated from the world, she is also related to it.

The Pandora episode constitutes a miniature version of the world at large. The episode has thus a synecdochical relation to the overall story told in *Theogony*. The Pandora episode incorporates the cosmological elements. Moreover, the episode is about creation: Pandora is composed of earth, her head wreathed in grass and flowers. Her clothing and adornments shine by virtue of the earth's gold and silver. The creatures represented on her diadem not only populate the world but also are themselves metonymic of earth, sea, and sky. Eros, the fourth primordial element, is represented by a reference to Pandora's erotic charm (*charis*). In light of this amalgamation of diverse earthly elements, the Theogonic Pandora can be said to mirror the world. As such, she mediates between men and the world.

Seen as a miniature of the world, the didactic role of the myth of Pandora becomes obvious. Nowhere else does the text of *Theogony* present the world to the reader as an object of meditation or admiration. Only with the appearance of the first woman is it possible for us to break from the flux of phenomena. This episode therefore marks a turning point in the cosmogony. It undergirds a provisional substitute, functioning as a visual reflection of the untitled cosmos. Although the poem does not name or define the cosmos, the story of Pandora's creation nevertheless seems to satisfy an unconscious desire for such terminology. The experience of gazing at Pandora compensates for the lack of any unifying conception of the cosmos; her depiction paves the way for the possibility of grasping the poem as a whole. Reflecting the unity of the cosmological poem, Pandora's image manifests metonymically the unified appearance of the world.

THAUMA IDESTHAI

Pandora is the first object to impress upon the human mind the understanding that what it perceives is the world of phenomena. This is the context for recalling that Pandora is characterized as a substitute for fire (570). Interpreters who are guided by the ancient notion of female insatiability conceive of her as a symbol of women's unquenchable passion.⁴⁵ Yet while fire signifies heat, the primary symbolic sense it conjures is light.⁴⁶ In fact, one of the distinctive features of the feminine image is its radiance. Given that the appearance of the universe in *Theogony* is generally murky and dark, the feminine provides a moment of illumination, of enlightenment. Pandora pours forth streams of light that are derived from two sources. The first is the fire that melted gold and silver into her shiny finery. The second is the divine charm breathed into her, which grants her visibility.⁴⁷ And since her figure gives off light, the gods and men nearby not only behold her, but also see by her the world. In this sense, the creation of Pandora is an etiological myth addressing the origin of seeing. It can be regarded as a foundational myth for the kind of scientific inquiry into the mechanism of seeing envisaged in *Timaeus*, where the "fiery eye" theory of vision is formulated. Plato explains that the mechanism of seeing consists in a coalescence of the external fire of daylight with the internal fire of the eye (*Tim.* 45b–46a). Although we cannot assume that Hesiod subscribed to even a primitive version of the theory of vision, the mythical encounter of the human eye with the glimmering appearance of Pandora nevertheless provides a metaphorical space for the scientific articulation of vision.

Pandora's radiant appearance is, as the text tells us more than once, *thauma idesthai*, "a wonder to see."⁴⁸ She is a source of wonder, and we cannot help but think of the place assigned to wonder by another tradition—namely, philosophy. Philosophy has its origin, as the Greeks saw it, in wonder. Aristotle, following his teacher Plato, observed that philosophy began with wonder (*Metaph.* A, 982b11–12). Wonder is the feeling, or the mood, or the kind of experience that presents the world to us in a manner calling for our reflection. At the same time, this is a reflection that is not governed by rationality. "This sense of wonder is the mark of the philosopher," Socrates explains to the young Theaetetus. "Philosophy indeed has no other origin" (*Thet.* 155d).⁴⁹ Wonder, moreover, seems to be intrinsically tied to and powerfully present in the realm of the visible. "Philosophy indeed has no other origin," Socrates continues, "and he was a good genealogist who made Iris the daughter of Thaumas" (155d). Thaumas,

the divine figure of wonder, is the father of Iris. And so, for Plato, Iris, the vision of the rainbow, is the embodiment of wonder in the domain of the visual. The rainbow is a natural phenomenon that not only strikes the eye with its beauty but calls for an explanation as well. And yet even when an explanation is at hand and we understand how the rainbow is created, there remains a sense of wonder, of the unexplainable. Wonder is the appearance of a world whose mystery cannot be reduced to our (human) understanding.

Under this philosophical sign of wonder we can return to *Theogony*, which presents several instances of wonder, among which the example of Pandora is the most conspicuous. In what way does the wonder of Pandora foreshadow the origin of philosophy? That is to say, in what way is Pandora's wonder a source of reflection? This is an opportunity to examine the interconnections between the cases of wonder presented in *Theogony*.

PANDORA VERSUS TYPHOEUS

The shocking, or terrifying, aspect of Pandora has been commonly understood as related to her bestial nature. Hesiod's commentary on the nature of women seems to associate the devouring belly of the female—that which never finds satisfaction, from sex or from food—with the bestial representation wrought on Pandora's diadem. In fact, however, the only explicit reference to Pandora's appearance as frightening is in the description of the diadem:

Around her head she put a golden crown that the famous lame god elaborately made himself with his own hands to please his father Zeus. On it he lavished many carefully wrought things, *wonderful to see*: Terrible wild creatures reared up on land or sea, *wonderful things*, like living beings with voices, and upon all of them he breathed charm. (*Th.* 578–84, my emphasis)

Pandora is human. But she looks like a young woman as radiant as a goddess, which means that she also has a divine part. In addition, the ornaments on her diadem accord her a bestial dimension. Pandora is in this sense a hybrid, bringing together the human, the divine, and the bestial. Such a triadic nature might, furthermore, be understood to be analogous to the Platonic soul, composed of logic, emotion, and appetite. This, however, is not the case. Pandora is not bestial in the same sense that she is divine or human. Her association with the world of beasts is not the same as her relationship to humans and gods. She resembles humanity and

carries a divine aura in ways that are distinct from the ways in which she resembles a beast. According to the description in *Theogony*, she does not look like an animal and exhibits no animal-like qualities. The bestial aspect is limited to the adornment on her diadem. The animal decoration does not qualify her persona; it symbolizes, rather, another figure, external to Pandora, an in version of Pandora. Rather than reflecting her, her diadem prefigures her in version: the monstrous Typhoeus. The animal representation on the diadem, I would argue, is a condensed reference to the figure of Typhoeus.

The monstrous Typhoeus, about whom we hear in the second part of *Theogony*, is the last creature born to Gaia, through a union with Tartaros. This last birth has been understood as representing Gaia's final and unsuccessful attempt to challenge Zeus's authority. The diadem is a manifold thing, portraying a diverse gallery of beasts whose liveliness is achieved by their vocal verisimilitude. Analogously, Typhoeus's monstrosity lies in its multifarious visual and sonorous manifestation. It exhibits a hundred snakeheads with terrifying fiery tongues and eyes. But the crux of its savageness is found in its multiplicity of voices. This creature is able simultaneously to utter every sound. The divergence of the voices it so mimetically pronounces gives the creature its multifarious visual verisimilitude.

Typhoeus challenges Zeus by virtue of the great power embodied in its deadly glowing tongues and in the spark of its eyes. The monster's fire represents a heathen antithesis to Zeus's lightning. Moreover, it threatens Zeus's rule because it conspires against the univocal voice characteristic of Zeus's institutionalized order. The poet makes it clear that Typhoeus's polyphony is dangerous when he refers to its overwhelming effect: a wonder to hear (*thaumat' akousai*, 834.) In fact, he has already identified this danger earlier in his text when describing Hephaestus's work of art. For Pandora's diadem is a visual commemoration, encoded in the vivid portrayal of the animals, of Zeus's subjugation of Typhoeus's stunning voice. The diadem represents the moment when the subversive bestial voices are silenced by Zeus's overwhelming power, the power of visibility. In this way, Pandora's diadem sublimates Typhoeus's vocal monstrosity by subverting it into a charming sight. The repression of the dangerous voices is complete once the effect inscribed by the idiom "a wonder to hear," *thaumat' akousai* (834) is abandoned in favor of the visual effect, "a wonder to see," *thauma idesthai* (581) and *thaumasia* (584).⁵⁰

Pandora's diadem transforms voice into a visual icon. As such, it prefigures Zeus's defeat of Typhoeus. At the same time, its resplendent figures

are testimony to the new status the monstrous voice has acquired through the ekphrasis: a dead, or silent, voice is made visible by divine artisanship and then by poetry. Pandora's splendor refers to the spectator to another *sema*, to be interpreted analogously to the stone *sema* established by Zeus as a memorial in Delphi. The stone, originally served to Kronos as a substitute for baby Zeus and then vomited up from Kronos's dark entrails, was granted the glorious appearance of *thauma* by Zeus (500).⁵¹ Pandora's illuminating power resides, therefore, in her capacity to elucidate meanings buried deep within the cosmic beginning.⁵²

PANDORA'S BRIGHT LIGHT VERSUS ZEUS'S BLINDING LIGHTNING

The fact that the sight of Pandora shocks and dazzles is not, in itself, an indication of her destructiveness. This is especially notable in contrast with Zeus, whose thunder and lightning blind. Zeus's lightning is potentially dangerous for the faculty of seeing. And, indeed, it is by means of thunder and lightning that Zeus proves his omnipotence in the battle against the Titans. After a long, unrelenting struggle, Zeus finally shoots flashes of lightning upon the earth and sea that ignite the whole universe with burning fire and fill the air with unbearable heat. Surprisingly, the act results not in total destruction but, rather, in Zeus's victory. The divine fire does not manifest its true power in the blaze, but in its light, which blinds the Titans' eyes (698). This epiphany—this manifestation of Zeus's power in the appearance of a most radiant light—is a fatal sign for the Titans, whose consequent blindness delivers them in to the chains of the three Giants. The wonder ignited by Pandora's sight, however, does not involve physical destruction. Her bright appearance does not blind. On the contrary, it sharpens the sight. The visual faculty of her beholders is enhanced. The presence of Pandora as a *thauma idesthai* opens our eyes to the visual field. Men are no longer caught randomly in the visual field; as Pandora's beholders they perceive, they become engaged in what they see.

PANDORA'S ENLIGHTENMENT AND HESIOD'S INITIATION

On the occasion of his initiation at the hands of the Muses (*Th.* 30–31), Hesiod refers to a wonderful sight: "And they gave me a flourishing laurel staff, plucking the branch, wonderful to gaze on [*theeton*]." Translators tend to read *theeton* as a predicate modifying the laurel branch, one that qualifies it as having a pleasant appearance.⁵³ *Theeton* is applied to that which is gazed at in wonder. Yet Hesiod experiences the staff as a symbol of his poetical inauguration, and, more specifically, of his transformative

encounter with the Muses. It seems to me, therefore, that *theetón* qualifies not the laurel branch specifically, but the initiation scene more generally. In other words, the wondrous encompasses the whole encounter with the Muses, beginning as Hesiod's herd is pasturing at the foot of Helicon, continuing as the Muses introduce themselves to him, and concluding with his initiation with the laurel branch (22–31). The whole event is a wonder to behold.

When one reads the poem from the beginning, this appearance is indeed celebrated dramatically. Hesiod describes the divine performance of the Muses as they sing and dance, assigning precedence to their beautiful voices; the Muses can be heard but cannot be seen. As the preface states, they perform in the dark of the night. The poet, however, does not focus on scant, faint, dim figures barely visible in the gloom. He rather accentuates the murkiness of the nocturnal scene, describing the Muses as hidden in a thick cloud (*Th.* 9), an epic formulation for saying they were invisible.⁵⁴

Theogony begins in a state of total darkness, murkiness, and invisibility. Not only is the beginning dark: its general outlook upon the world is no less gloomy. Life is lived in the dimness of night. But the night is also characterized by vitality, for this is when divine poetry is to be heard, indicative of the intangible presence of the gods, and when shepherds like Hesiod pasture their herds. Night—which plays a most important role within the cosmogony as the parent of all hidden thoughts, intentions, and passions, as well as death, sleep, and dreams—dominates human life (*Th.* 211–32). Hesiod's poem insistently portrays darkness as the regulative principle governing the world. Light, brought by its divine signifier, Zeus, and by the Muses, is the sign of irregular events. In Greek mythology, the gaze of gods upon humanity is a source of light. For poets like Hesiod, the encounter with the Muses is therefore a wonder to see. It marks a transformative moment when the poet is granted illumination. Through this encounter with the Muses, the poet ceases to be an ignorant inhabitant of caliginous darkness, occupied primarily with the appetites of his belly. Their radiant presence allows him to see, even if for just a moment, beyond his dreary existence. This is not by any means a metaphysical moment. It is not the kind of enlightenment that issues from the wonderful (*thaumastón*), sudden vision that Diotima associates with the epiphany of the transcendental world (*Symp.* 210e4–5). This is, rather, a lightning-brief clarification of what there is, a sudden illumination of what is regularly kept in the dark.

Whereas the Muses' gift is a unique kind of enlightenment for poets, Pandora symbolizes the gift of enlightenment for common people. She is the first figure to endow men with a perspective allowing them a reflective distance from the world. In this sense she predicates thought on visibility. She then preconditions visibility, marking the distance between man and world. This distance is a prerequisite for seeing. With Pandora, visibility becomes an indispensable element of being in the world.⁵⁵ Her crucial role in determining the experience of seeing can be detected in relation to the figure of Eros. Incorporating one of the principles of visibility in an early stage of *Theogony*, Eros is said to be "the most beautiful [*kallistos*] of the immortal gods" (120). However, such beauty is senseless in the dark state of the primordial world. Because Pandora's beauty shines in brightness, it liberates men from their primordial condition of blindness. Accentuating her visibility by means of her erotic charm and beauty, the gods open men to their senses. The latter now resemble Adam and Eve, whose eyes are wide open.

With the appearance of Pandora, the world of men has been radically changed; it is no longer the domain of nature. Once Pandora is introduced into the world, that world loses its naïveté. The wonder of Pandora produces in those who behold her a moment of self-realization. She leads her beholders to revise their past vision. Now dissatisfied with their own senses, men are deprived of the privileges granted them by their autochthonous nativity.⁵⁶ Since the creation of the first woman, men are no longer the world's autochthonic offspring. Men are denied their status as the world's naïve inhabitants as they begin to acquire the capacity to objectify the world, to perceive their own being as distinct from both the world and the gods who embody it.⁵⁷ In this way, Hesiod seems to be saying that Pandora's wonder is what expels men from the dreamland of nature. The world described in *Theogony* is a godly realm, for its nature is the creation of the gods and is indistinguishable from them. Prior to Pandora's appearance, humanity's primordial existence led humans to perceive themselves as a natural continuation of the anthropomorphic cosmology. Pandora's sight strikes the human mind with the realization that men are to be found outside, in front of, or in the world—they can no longer solely think of themselves as indistinguishable from it. The Hesiodic effect of wonder is not at all romantic—in contrast, for example, to Gaston Bachelard's view of wonder as that wishful moment in which we melt in to the world.⁵⁸ In Bachelard's account, cosmic beauty is what allows us to return to the world from which Pandora's wondrous appearance separated us.

Surprised by this discovery, men can no longer perceive themselves as an intrinsic part and extension of the world. They can no longer perceive the world as a given. In wondering about the nature of their world through Pandora's estranging effect, they also become desiring men. The introduction of beauty to the human domain constitutes existence (the world) and demarcates one being from the other. Pandora's beauty, therefore, instantiates difference. Hence, men not only alter their disposition toward the world. Wonder at Pandora brings desire, whereby men are reborn as sexual beings.

The end of the age of innocence results in humanity's transformation from the unmarked and undifferentiated mass to a collection of individuals.⁵⁹ Pandora's enlightening force is darkened by Hesiod's outburst of misogynist clichés. Yet her wonder-full image cannot be ignored. Hesiod's bitter denunciation of the female genus has indeed shaped the heritage of Pandora, and yet it still leaves open an alternative, unapologetic way of reading her complex figure. This kind of reading approaches Pandora by bracketing—not forgetting, but methodologically suspending—*Theogony's* misogyny. Once we release our reading from the impact of Hesiod's anti-feminist diatribe, we can see the intrinsic ties connecting the figure of Pandora, and the ways in which she echoes the wonder of poetry and of insight in general, to the very splendor of *Theogony*.

Pandora and the Myth of Otherness

τοῖς δ' ἐγὼ ἀντὶ πυρὸς δώσω κακόν, ᾧ κεν ἅπαντες
τέρπωνται κατὰ θυμόν· ἐὼν κακὸν ἀμφαγαπῶντες. "...
ὥς ἔφατ', ἐκ δ' ἐγέλασσε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε.
εἰς Ἐπιμηθέα πέμπε πατὴρ κλυτὸν Ἀργεῖφόντην
δῶρον ἄγοντα, θεῶν ταχὺν ἄγγελον· οὐδ' Ἐπιμηθεὺς
ἐφράσαθ' ὥς οἱ ἔειπε Προμηθεὺς μὴ ποτε δῶρον
δέξασθαι παρ Ζηνὸς Ὀλυμπίου, ἀλλ' ἀποπέμψειν
ἐξοπίσω, μὴ πού τι κακὸν θνητοῖσι γένηται·
αὐτὰρ ὁ δεξάμενος, ὅτε δὴ κακὸν εἶχ', ἐνόησε.
Πρὶν μὲν γὰρ ζώεσκον ἐπὶ χθονὶ φῦλ' ἀνθρώπων
νόσφιν ἄτερ τε κακῶν καὶ ἄτερ χαλεποῖο πόνοιο
νούσων τ' ἀργαλέων, αἳ τ' ἀνδράσι Κῆρας ἔδωκαν.

—HESIOD, *Works and Days* 57–99

[I will give men as the price of fire an evil, in which all men will delight in their hearts, an evil they will warmly embrace. . . . But when he finished this sheer trick, without remedy, the father sent the famed Slayer of Argos, swift messenger of the gods, to take her to Epimetheus as a gift. And Epimetheus did not think how Prometheus had told him never to accept a gift from Olympian Zeus, but to send it back, lest it prove to be an evil for men. But when he took the gift, when he had the evil, he understood. Before this the races of men lived upon the earth free from evils, free from hard work, and without painful diseases that bring fates down upon men.

—Trans. JEFFREY M. HURWIT]

In the beginning there were only men. Then came the first woman and disrupted the self-sameness that grounded the harmonious condition of humanity.¹ Pandora appears in the world and immediately takes the form of the ultimate Other. But the fact that she bears the mark of otherness is due not only to her femininity or to her sexuality as such. Pandora is a

gift. Her appearance in the world is the appearance of something given to men. She is not an inherent element of the world, not a daughter of nature. The first woman lacks the autochthonic roots of men. Pandora presents a new mode of being in the world that stands in opposition to the natural being of men. Within a setting in which the world gives itself to mankind in a natural and spontaneous manner, Pandora introduces a new form of giving. She is a work of art, an artificial product contrived by the gods. She is a foreign element in a world of men, embodying a dimension of otherness that threatens the natural and self-sufficient rapport between men and their world.

In this chapter, I am concerned with the implications that Pandora's otherness carries for our understanding of Hesiod's *Works and Days*. Pandora's otherness has indeed been dealt with in the context of critiques of misogynist culture, and specifically in the context of feminist classical scholarship exploring the complexities of the relationship between femininity and otherness.² Feminist treatments of woman as an Other have first tended to map the concept of femininity in terms of the sets of oppositions that govern ancient binary thought. They have thus shown how ancient culture relegates the feminine, in opposition to the masculine, to a secondary and inferior domain of otherness consisting of such categories as the barbarian and the bestial.³

More recent treatments of femininity in ancient literature have not only dealt with the exclusion of otherness but have also tried to show that the very opposition between the masculine and the feminine, the same and the other, is already constitutive of ancient culture, society, and subjectivity. For feminist scholars such as Nicole Loraux and Page duBois, for example, women are the epitome of the very idea of difference. Women are no longer understood as a simple form of an excluded Other but are taken to be, in themselves, the mark of the idea of gender difference.⁴ Consequently, femininity reflects internal conflicts contained within a culture. The feminine, according to such readings, is not only marginalized but is, at the same time, operative in creating a dialectical relationship, a relationship of mutual interdependence between sameness and otherness.⁵ Building on this groundwork, I wish to examine the significance of Pandora's otherness in light of its contribution to the formation of Hesiod's didactic epic. In particular, I shall show that Pandora's trait as an Other governs the Hesiodic text and grounds its mechanism and effects.

Works and Days provides a detailed and complex portrayal of Pandora and comes much closer than *Theogony* to a concrete representation of the first woman as a human being.⁶ Her detailed portrait gives birth

to a uniquely specific persona. In fact, through Pandora a world of faceless inhabitants receives its first human portrait. Before her arrival, men had no distinctive identity, and no particular features. Moreover, the first woman is the first human in Hesiod's poetry to be given a name.⁷ Yet Pandora's otherness cannot be understood simply in terms of her foreign appearance in a world of men. She is in deed external to the masculine community, but her otherness is even more fundamental: it stems from the fact of her uniqueness, her singularity, which is the distinctive mark, the essence, of being human. What makes Pandora the ultimate Other is not her aberration from humankind but precisely her all-too-human quality. In this respect, she brings to Hesiod's text a bonding of the familiar and the strange. Pandora is the familiar stranger, an image of an estranged familiarity that, in my view, epitomizes the essence of the didactic epic.

FROM MOUNT HELICON TO A POETICS OF OTHERNESS

Hesiod's *Works and Days* presents us with a new form of poetics, radically different from his *Theogony*. The invention of the didactic epic testifies to a poetical transformation in Hesiod's work, and more specifically to the emergence of a new form of poetic consciousness. The background for the composition of *Works and Days* is a new conception of the language of poetry that Hesiod must have developed after *Theogony*—a new picture of the place of sameness and otherness in poetry, of the relationship between language, meaning, and truth. The gist of this picture lies, in my view, in Hesiod's recognition of an unbridgeable gap between his poetry and the divine utterance, so that the poet cannot evade a dimension of otherness that is always present in his language. I am concerned here, therefore, with the ethical development implied by the transition from the poetics of a theological cosmogony (*Theogony*) to the poetics of a didactic epic (*Works and Days*).⁸ In order to understand this new development, however, we first need to return to *Theogony*, and specifically to its formative poetical experience: Hesiod's encounter with the Muses on Mount Helicon.

Famous for its dramatic staging, this initiation scene pictures Hesiod, the ignorant shepherd, as chosen by the Muses to become their inspired poet. But it also gives voice to the Muses' uncanny self-presentation:

ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι, κά' ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον,
 ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,
 ἴδμεν δ', εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι.
 (*Th.* 26–28)

[Shepherds of the fields, poor fools, mere bellies!
We know how to say many lies similar (or identical)
To true things, but if we want, we know how to sing the truth.—Trans.
Pietro Pucci]⁹

The Muses know how to sing the truth, and at times they may actualize this knowledge. More commonly, however, and more accessibly to the human mind, they tell lies. These lies are perceived by the human audience as truth, a fact that does not make them any less untruthful. They remain lies because their relationship to truth is based on distortion, or alteration. “The Muses,” Pucci writes, “are the only source of truth, and since the poet will for ever be unable to compare their song with ‘the things as they are,’ he *cannot* be aware of the distortions, deflections, and inventions that draw the poetic discourse into falsehood and fiction.”¹⁰

To understand the Muses’ phrase “lies similar [or identical] to true things,” the term *homoia* is crucial. Pucci’s translation leaves the deliberation between “similar” and “identical” unresolved. This double sense of *homoia* is also important for understanding the ambiguity of the Muses’ song. They know that their song is identical to true things (“we know how to sing the truth”), but they also know how to sing it in a way that would appear to Hesiod to be similar to true things. In other words, Hesiod refers to two poetical options associated with the Muses: a kind of poetry in which truth is transcribed, and a poetical mode that is similar to, but nevertheless remains distinct from, truth. Inspired by Derida’s work, Pucci ascribes to Hesiod the belief that the original truth (to which the Muses’ song refers) is forever absent, remaining inaccessible for human imitation.¹¹

Pucci’s analysis of the encounter between Hesiod and the Muses is guided by both Platonic and postmodern readings of Hesiod. Plato’s theory of mimesis, on the one hand, and Derida’s notion of *différance*, on the other, enable Pucci to argue that Hesiod does not accept the traditional polarity between truth and falsehood. Pucci perceives the encounter between the Muses and Hesiod as the site where the opposition between truth and falsehood collapses. Since truth is forever lost, all we can say about the prevaricating nature of human mimesis is that it is a work of simulation. And in this sense Pucci reads *Theogony* in a manner that foreshadows the postmodern idea of the absence and inaccessibility of truth. What in my view remains unnoticed in Pucci’s interpretation is a distinction central to Hesiod’s poetry. That is, *Theogony* is a text that makes

a clear distinction between truth and falsehood. In particular, it is a text that celebrates the essential difference between divine and human poetry.

Pucci's failure to see this polarity is the result of the emphasis (and perhaps even the overemphasis) he puts on *Theogony* 26–28. A careful look at the passages that precede and follow the initiation scene reveals an entirely different picture of the twofold nature of poetry. Poetry has both divine and human roots. Its source can be either divine or human. In the programmatic preface of *Theogony*, Hesiod creates a place for divine poetry. Divine poetry is thus performed and heard (*Th.* 1–80), just as human poetry is, through the mouth of Hesiod. The distinction is between divine utterance, spoken solely among the gods, and the human-directed utterance by which the Muses influence and guide human poetic discourse. “True poetry” is the Muses’ poetry, addressed exclusively to the gods and performed in their abodes. “False poetry” is transmitted to inspired poets like Hesiod and accordingly addressed to human ears.¹² In contrast to Pucci's conclusion, the distinction is not that of an original and a copy.¹³ Rather, the distinction between divine and human poetry is based on the difference between the two audiences.

We will now consider Hesiod's conception of the difference between divine song (*Th.* 1–25, 36–80) and human poetry (*Th.* 26–35, 81–103). Human poets sing about the past and the future, as Hesiod testifies. “They breathed an inspired voice into me, so that I could tell of things to come and things of the past” (32). The Muses, however, whose divine song is introduced once again in line 36 (*mousaon archometha*), sing not only of past and future events but about the present as well: “They tell of the present, the future and the past and they fit them together with voice” (38–39). The accessibility of the present to the Muses stands in opposition to the fact that the present is not central to *Theogony*. The cosmogonical poem, according to Hesiod's conception of inspired human poetry, is concerned with the mythical past. Accordingly, human poetry is endowed with an oracular capacity that uncovers the buried past and reveals the unknown future. This functional dimension does not hold, however, in the case of divine poetry, for the divine recipients do not live according to the rules of human temporality. While the different categories of time—past (*pro t'eonta*), present (*ta t'eonta*), and future (*t'essomena*)—reflect the subjugation of humanity to change and constant movement, the stable realm of immortality identified with the rule of Olympian Zeus is free of temporal categories. This explains why the Muses' song effects a harmonious relationship between the three temporal conditions (*homereusai*, 39). In contrast

to human poetry, which approaches the subject of the divine genealogy from a human perspective, divine poetry reflects the divine experience of time, one that is unattainable to humanity. In divine poetry, the present is the most significant of the three dimensions of time—not only because the present provides an insight into the meaning of being, but also because divine beings live in a temporal continuance, an unchanging present. This harmoniously continuous form of temporality reflects the idea of eternal time.

Unbound by human temporal constraints, divine poetry is lighter than human poetry: “They [the Muses] delight [*terpousai*] the mighty mind of father Zeus” (*Th.* 37). Divine poetry is identified with joy, pleasure, and delight, which correspond to the superiority of the gods (cf. 36, 40, 41, and 51). The emotional force of human poetry, in contrast, has an ambiguous form, creating an oxymoron of painful joy. More specifically, human poetry plays out in the space between gain and loss. It gives and takes concomitantly. It can assuage and change the spirit, temporarily removing pain and grief. It is simultaneously a reminder (of a remote past) and a suppressor (of an impoverished present). Human poetry creates painful joy because its capacity to cause forgetfulness does not cause pain to disappear. Pain is merely bracketed, or hidden in the depth of memory represented by Mnemosyne, the Muses’ mother, who is the maternal source of the poem (96–103).

Hesiod is well aware of the inferiority of his poetical deliverance in comparison with the Muses’ divine art. He emphasizes the failure of his inspired poetry to reach the superior level of divine poetry in his recurrent attempts (three in all) to capture the latter’s perfection. *Theogony* describes three events in which the pure song of the Muses is delivered to the gods. In the first scene (1–25), the Muses sing and dance on Mount Helicon. In the second (36–52), they sing in Zeus’s abode on Mount Olympus. The final scene (53–80) occurs on their way from Pieria, their birthplace, to Mount Olympus. These three occasions are set apart from the composition of *Theogony* as a whole because the cosmological poem is an example of inspired poetry mediated by a human poet (*Th.* 104–15). On all three occasions the Muses’ intended audience is exclusively divine. As a consequence, the content of their last two songs is only briefly sketched by Hesiod. This absence might have led us to accept the general notion of the inaccessibility of the Muses’ true poetry, except that, through Hesiod, we become witnesses to their song on Mount Helicon (1–25) and are thus granted partial access.

The Muses' performance on Mount Helicon is exceptional because it stays in the memory of a human witness despite its sacred nature. Like Actaeon, Hesiod has transgressed the boundaries that mark off the sacred space and has heard the divine voice that he is not supposed to hear. But Hesiod's transgression is less a cure than Actaeon's. While the latter views a forbidden sight, Hesiod only hears a voice. A misty night conceals the divine (forbidden) view, yet the shepherd senses the holy presence of the goddesses. We know this because the specification of time and place makes their presence credible and concrete. Although their true song is veiled by the screen of darkness, it is not unavailable to human experience. It is heard and, consequently, partially revealed to the human auditor.

Under the Muses' tutelage, Hesiod aspires to compose poetry that is similar or identical (*homoia*) to their song. However, this aspiration toward identity is futile, since time and again, as we have seen, Hesiod brings out the inherent differences between divine and inspired human poetry. At the same time, the composer of *Theogony* does not abandon the desire to draw close to the divine song and even to assimilate its divine principles. *Theogony* records Hesiod's memory of being struck by the revelatory and inspirational power of the Muses, being utterly spellbound by the mystical experience on Mount Helicon. His cosmological poem is, as a result, suffused with a naive, forceful desire to produce poetry that will be indistinguishable from that of the Muses.

This motivation is characteristic of a young poet's first work; it will weaken in Hesiod's didactic poem. In *Works and Days* he abandons an alleged Golden Age characterized by the desire to create poetry that is similar to divine poetry. As a mature and disillusioned poet, he seeks to explore the meaning of a life devoid of the idea of sameness.

The meanings of the adjective *homoios*, which range from "identical" and "same" to "similar," reveal the problematic relations between things. *Homoios* carries two principal connotations. On the one hand it specifies the kind of resemblance of one thing to another that produces the illusion that they are indistinguishable. On the other, it characterizes the resemblance of one thing to another under the understanding that they are two different entities. While *Theogony* carries more ambiguities in regard to the relation between similar things, *Works and Days* is closer to the idea that all similar things are essentially different. In *Theogony* Hesiod's use of *homoios* is ambivalent, since he both perceives the Muses' song as distinct from his own and declares that his poetry stems from a divine source. *Theogony* expresses the poet's aspiration to imbibe the

Muses' poetic power. The young Hesiod wanted his poem to be similar to the Muses' song.

Works and Days expresses a different poetic frame of mind. Here Hesiod gives up on the goal of sameness and even becomes disillusioned with his earlier poetic ambition. He seems to revise the meaning of *homoios*, which now connotes a totally unattainable identity. Hesiod no longer contends that his poetry can achieve even an apparent identity with divine poetry. He wants it to contain divine values such as justice, but he does not think of it as similar to a divine utterance. *Works and Days* interiorizes the essential difference between divine and human utterances.

As an epic, *Works and Days* stands in contrast to Hesiod's earlier cosmological poem in that it carries clear pragmatic and ethical goals. The poem is addressed to a specific, nonexpert audience whom Hesiod seeks to teach how to cultivate the land. His didactic program is guided by an ethical view that equates knowledge of farming with the quest for a good and just life. We are not dealing here with a guide to better farming so much as with a work whose focus is the educational process itself. What occupies the center of *Works and Days* is the dynamic relationship between the poet and his student, a relationship that serves as an ethical prism for understanding the world of farming. In contrast to *Theogony*, *Works and Days* is immersed in the social and cultural dimensions of human life, and its poetics is governed by the principle of otherness. Hence, in comparison with *Theogony*, Hesiod develops the autonomy of, and grants autobiographical depth to, the figures of poet and listener. The poetics of didactic poetry is grounded, as we shall now see, on the difference between these two figures.

As we have already noticed, Hesiod's revision of the myth of sameness begins with his relationship with the Muses. In *Works and Days* he severs the composition of his poetry from their tutelage.¹⁴ *Works and Days* differs from *Theogony* in that it is presented as Hesiod's own creation. It is not inspired poetry. Nor is it a kind of poetry that derives directly from the Muses' original voice. Rather, Hesiod's didactic epic establishes clear distinctions between the divine and human realms. As human discourse, *Works and Days* emphasizes the author's presence by means of didactic and autobiographical elements. The main novelty of Hesiod's didactic epic is its abandonment of an external divine provenance in favor of the author's personal and moral experience. Hesiod marks his poetical speech with his own signature. He emphasizes his fears and beliefs and adds bits of biography and personality, thereby creating a form of poetics that is based

on human perspective.¹⁵ In contrast to *Theogony* and to Homeric poetry, Hesiod's didactic poetry seeks to concretize the figures of speaker and intended listener, both of whom play distinctive roles in the poem. As the first didactic literary creation in Greek literature, *Works and Days* is particularly concerned with grounding the ethical function of human poetry. The poet's didactic authority is first of all achieved through his undertaking to scrutinize the distinction between the human and the divine.

THE FANTASY OF SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN MEN AND GODS

The "secular" poetics of *Works and Days* also suggests that its worldview is not the one suggested by the cosmological picture presented in *Theogony*. The world has developed since its initial appearance in *Theogony*. It has acquired a historical dimension, in particular as a result of the myth of the Five Ages (*W&D* 106–201). As noted above, Hesiod insists on recounting the myth of human history from a human point of view. He does not inculcate the Muses in questions concerning the credibility of his didactic authority or the veracity of the myths he narrates. Moreover, he explicitly denies the existence of a divine source for his narrative by introducing the myth of the Five Ages with skeptical remarks.

εἰ δ' ἐθέλεις, ἕτερόν τοι ἔγωγ' λόγον ἐκκορυφώσω
 εὖ καὶ ἐπισταμένως· σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῆσιν.
 (*W&D* 106–7)

[And if you wish, I will outline for you another story (*heteron logon*),
 Well and skillfully store it up in your mind.]

The story Hesiod refers to is the myth of the Five Ages. He presents it here as *heteron logon*, another tale, a different version. It is his second attempt to describe the power of Zeus over human affairs. His first *logos* was the myth of Pandora (*W&D* 42–105). These two successive myths share an interest in exploring the meaning of the present through a pivotal event—the creation of Pandora or the demise of the Golden Age. Both events explain the significance of the present time on the basis of the past, which serves to highlight the present and make it perceptible. By focusing on the present human condition, Hesiod once again confines his poetry to the human domain.¹⁶

The theme of the fall, the end of the blissful condition of humanity, is told first in the myth of Pandora and then again in the myth of the Five

Ages. Both myths, thus, present a pristine period when “from the same source [*homothēn*], gods and mortals came in to being” (*W&D* 108). But Hesiod’s strategy of providing two versions of the same story raises questions about their validity and, more particularly, about their shared argument. Using two versions destabilizes the notion of identity and reinforces the fantastical, skeptical, and ephemeral dimension of human poetry. Whereas the depiction of the Golden Age celebrates the intercourse between gods and men, the following section—on the end of that age—reverses course and is devoted to disillusionment:

Δεύτερον αὖτε γένος πολὺ χειρότερον μετόπισθεν
 ἀργύρεον ποίησαν Ὀλύμπια δώματ’ ἔχοντες,
 χρυσεὶ φῦν ἑναλίγκιον οὔτε νόημα·
 (*W&D* 127–29)

[Next after these the dwellers upon Olympus created a second generation, of silver, far worse than the other. They were not like the golden ones either in shape or spirit.—Trans. Richmond Lattimore]

The myth of the Golden Age is always a commemoration of the demise of that age, of the transition from the first (golden) to the second (silver) generation. How is this transition explained? Why did the Olympians choose to create an inferior generation once the Golden Age had passed? Can this version of the end of the Golden Age be understood as a myth recounting humanity’s fall? There is no clear answer to these disturbing questions. Human existence in the Golden Age is paradoxical. How can the perfect become imperfect, dissolving into a lesser (silver) human generation? And why does the divine way of life of the Golden Age suddenly start behaving like humanity? Did the perfect Golden Age actually conceal a moral flaw? Were there faults in the ideal (divine) human condition that required divine punishment—namely, creation of an inferior humanity?¹⁷

I suggest that the Golden Age’s defect is to be detected in the erroneous human assumption—which is equivalent to the notion of human pretension (*hubris*)—that humanity is identical to divinity. In other words, the transition from the Golden Age to the Silver Age is a process of disillusionment in relation to an idealistic, unreal (that is, erroneous) picture of an ancient past. Whereas in the Silver Age human insolence is dominant, as manifested in sacrilegious behavior, the moral failing of the Golden Age lies in humanity’s misconception of itself as sharing the same origins as

the gods.¹⁸ The myth of the Golden Age is therefore not about a lost perfect human condition, but about the human misconception of its divine identity.

The identification of gods and humans is an old dream: the radicalism of *Works and Days* is to be found in its attempt to delimit that dream to the unattainable mythic realm. Hesiod refers to sameness as a fantastic phenomenon confined to the Golden Age. In succeeding ages, as we shall see, the possibility of sameness cannot even be an object of fantasy. In addition, the inherent asymmetry between humans and gods affects relationships between humans as well. When the Golden Age is lost, dissimilarity increases: humans come to be not only dissimilar to the gods (as they were in the Golden Age), but also to one another. The loss of the Golden Age consequently represents the impossibility of maintaining a range of intimate affiliations, communalities, and solidarities. But how did the fantastic identification of gods and men come into being, and how do *Theogony* and *Works and Days* reflect Hesiod's attitude toward that fantasy?

The genealogy of the gods presented in *Theogony* does not include the origins of the human species. *Theogony* does not make a place for men in the genealogical map of the gods. It would appear, then, that the account of a shared origin is a product of wishful thinking, expressed in the form of human needs, ambitions, and desires. More specifically, the human fantasy of being identical to the gods is inseparable from the aspiration to make human existence an integral part of the world. By fantasizing about its divine origins, humanity claims possession over the world. Indeed, Hesiod's theological discourse does not posit an acute dichotomy between the gods and the world. The genealogy of the gods that is recounted in *Theogony* is also an account of the development of the cosmos in general. *Theogony* conceives of the gods as worldly elements and the world as a manifestation of their divine realm. When reading *Works and Days* in light of *Theogony*, one cannot help but see that Hesiod has revised his previous account of the relationship between men and the world. He separates gods and men, which entails the latter's expulsion from an immature image of the world. Men are no longer allowed to perceive themselves as integral to the world. But humanity failed to internalize this separation—according to Hesiod, men ignore it because they take humanity's possession of the world for granted.¹⁹ The origins of this attitude toward the world are to be found in the primal human condition as described in *Theogony*. In that cosmological poem, men lack a perspective on the world and are blind to its autonomous appearance. In *Works and Days* this perceptual

limitation develops into a grievous moral weakness. Men's relation to the world is instrumental. The world was handed to men and has been handled by men. Men live and toil in it. And so the natural world, being used and abused by men, has, in men's minds, become inseparable from the social and ethical dimension of human life. It has become a humanized world.

The myth of the Five Ages can thus be said to tell of the symbiosis between men and the world.²⁰ This symbiosis has two stages. The first belongs to the mythical time of the Golden Age; the second pertains to the historical era that followed. The Golden Age symbolizes an era when human and divine were considered synonymous. That affinity between gods and humans was possible because of humanity's state of being: a life of fabulous wealth where needs were perfectly fulfilled, one in which the earth was a place of total, spontaneous fecundity (*W&D* 115–19). In such blissful conditions human needs were not recognized as needs at all. Men of the Golden Age were, as a result, trapped in an illusion of being identical to the gods.

The end of the Golden Age did not, however, mark the end of this symbiosis. Instead, a new kind of symbiosis developed—this time between man and world. The Silver, Bronze, and Iron Ages experienced a steady decline in every aspect of life with each succeeding generation. The wealth of the Golden Age was lost. Religious duties were unfulfilled, which showed disrespect for the gods (*W&D* 135–36). And since these three generations have proven to be morally inferior to that of the Golden Age, they have encountered pain, illness, and a miserable death. The waning of religious devotion implies a severing from the divine. Yet in undoing their ties to the gods, men did not divorce themselves from the world. In other words, the symbiosis between men and gods has continued, but with a slight semantic difference. This altered attitude on the part of humanity found expression in men's instrumental relationship to the earth. The generosity of the earth was now taken for granted; men no longer conceived of it as an autonomous entity (*W&D* 145–55, 189–95). Blind to its autonomy, failing to recognize that it exists independently of humans, humanity does not see the world *qua* world. It reduces or restricts the meaning of the world to that which is representative of humanity. This perception of the world as something identical to them is an expression of men's megalomaniac nature:

χειροδίκαι· ἕτερος δ' ἑτέρου πόλιν ἐξαλαπάξει.
οὐδέ τις εὐόρκου χάρις ἔσσεται οὔτε δικαίου
οὐδ' ἀγαθοῦ, μᾶλλον δὲ κακῶν ρεκτῆρα καὶ ὕβριν

ἀνέρα τιμήσουσι· δίκη δ' ἐν χερσὶ καὶ αἰδῶς
 οὐκ ἔσται, βλάβει δ' ὁ κακὸς τὸν ἀρείονα φῶτα
 μύθοισι σκολιοῖς ἐνέπων, ἐπὶ δ' ὄρκον ὁμῆται.
 (*W&D* 189–94)

[Strong of hand, one man (*heteros*) shall seek the city of another (*heterou*). No man who keeps his oath would be called charismatic, nor the righteous or the good man. Rather they shall respect the violence of the evildoer. Right will be in the arm. Shame will not be. The vile man will crowd his better out and attack him with twisted accusation and swear an oath to his story.—Adapted from Lattimore translation]

Absent from this description of the Iron Age is any reference to the natural elements of the physical world. Whereas the account of the Golden Age mentions the grain-giving land (*zeidoros aroura*, *W&D* 117), later allusions to the natural elements refer to materials—silver, bronze, and iron—only outside their natural setting, emphasizing instead their new artificial function, their service to humanity. As each generation successively discovers these elements, they become mere tools in men's hands. And so they come to represent human desires and ambitions (power and wealth). That is how the world's elements have come to be identified as human qualities.

Hesiod tells of the result of humanity's active ignorance of the world in the Iron Age in his description of its urban landscape and character. We now have a world of cities: "One man [*heteros*] shall seek the city of another [*heterou*]." Men conceive of the world as an entity that provides a place for creating their own communities. Once these communities are established in the form of cities, they are made into human places. They rarely bear the signs of their original natural character. These communities divide the world and create new methods of living that culminate in war and other forms of aggression. Life in the cities thus encourages hostile relationships between different peoples, just as it accentuates the differences among men. *Heteros* does not simply distinguish one party from the other. It raises the idea that there is no place in the Iron Age for harmonious and equal groups.

Men develop a mirror relationship vis-à-vis the world: they see in it a reflection of themselves, while their behavior in turn affects the world. Following this interpretation, the passages concerning the Silver, Bronze, and Iron Ages disclose a tight-fisted world that is no longer identified with the benevolent and generous image of Mother Earth, as in the Golden Age,

but, rather, reflects a violent and stingy father. Since the world mirrors the human condition, it comes to appear as a frightening place full of evil ambition and dreadful death, a world that is miserable and dark, like its inhabitants.

Hesiod conceives of the Golden Age, and of the Silver, Bronze, and Iron Ages that follow, as reflecting two misconceptions about the place of man in the world: a false identification with the gods, and a false identification with the world. He does not endorse a nostalgic return to a Golden Age in which men and gods would again become identical, but neither does he approve of the tendency to humanize the world. *Works and Days* offers a didactic program for men to establish an appropriate place for themselves in the world. Hesiod is determined to reform the relationship between men and the world by teaching the former to develop a sense of humility in relation to both nature and the gods. In this sense, *Works and Days* is dedicated to an understanding of a world that is other than human. Hesiod wishes to return to a world that is familiar to the farmer. Familiarity, achieved through sweat and toil, reveals the division between man and the world and allows the latter to receive the honor it deserves as man learns its idiosyncratic phenomena, functions, and regularities. Interestingly, this learning became possible in the most horrible of human generations, the Iron Age, Hesiod's generation, when nature was no longer seen to be a spontaneous phenomenon and an infinite provider (*W&D* 174). Hesiod consequently teaches men to become aware of their needs and assume responsibility for their own well-being. The ability to satisfy one's own needs depends on a familiarity with, a close observation of, nature's laws. In order to enjoy the earth's productivity, in order to keep the fire alive, men need to acquaint themselves with the order of the natural elements. Even then, however, Hesiodic knowledge will not make the world an entirely familiar place, absolutely one and the same with men. As Hesiod remarks: "Yet still, the mind of Zeus of the aegis changes with changing occasions, and it is a hard thing for mortal men to figure" (*W&D* 483–84, trans. Lattimore).

In many ways *Works and Days* is a tragic epic that mourns the loss of innocence. But what is so tragic about losing something we never had? The nostalgic view of the Golden Age does not seriously encourage a return to it. In what way, then, is the mythical memory of the coexistence of gods and men vital to the human experience? *Works and Days* constructs a complicated notion of this imaginative world. On the one hand, it locates the realm of the Golden Age within a fantastic framework. On the other hand,

it does not conceive divine and human coexistence as a utopian moment.²¹ This means that the Golden Age represents an unattainable object of desire, the emphasis being on its unattainability. What, then, is the aim of poetry, which apparently arouses a futile longing in its audience?

Homer's version of the Golden Age is illuminating in this respect. The description of the island of Phaeacia in Book 7 of the *Odyssey* renders it as a Golden Age kingdom.²² The palace of Alkinoos shimmers with gold and silver. The royal garden is disconnected from the changing of the seasons, producing a great variety of fruits that grow abundantly without requiring cultivation. The gods join the Phaeacians at sacrificial meals and dine with them. And yet this ideal way of life is carried on under the shadow of an old divine curse that threatens the Phaeacians with a mortal rebuke for their hospitality. They express their outstanding kindness toward Odysseus by taking their guest back home in their magical ships, an act for which they are eventually punished. Odysseus is the last mortal man to be allowed into their land, and with his departure this ideal place becomes forever off limits to strangers. Lost in their glorious exclusiveness, the Phaeacians are doomed to oblivion. Such an unhappy destiny brings the ideal image of this land into question, for it turns out that even such a perfect society as that of the Phaeacians eventually succeeds in offending the gods. Their consequent expulsion from the human world is an indication of how they abused their close relationship with the divine realm (they are called *ankhitheoi*, "relatives of the gods," at *Od.* 5.35) by mistaking it for a sign of their complete identity with the gods.

Nostalgic poetry such as that found in the *Odyssey* calls upon its listeners to know their place in the world and use it in order to gain ethical knowledge. Arousing a yearning for an idealized world, nostalgic poetry entices its listeners to transcend their habitual existence and aspire to a better life. It can generate a form of escapism (which would be manifest, for example, if Odysseus remained with the Phaeacians and forgot about his homeland). Or it can encourage a reconciliation with one's condition (his decision to return to Ithaka). Acknowledgment of the imperfection of the human condition is essential for ethical responsibility. If life is imperfect, it is our responsibility to make it worthy. Odysseus's decision to return home reflects such an understanding. Home is where he assumes responsibility for his life, despite the inexorable presence of death. I read *Works and Days* as a didactic version of *nostos*, an epic homecoming that, in the manner of the *Odyssey*, strives to bring a lost farmer back to his land and endow him with a better understanding of the world. *Works and Days*

is not nostalgic toward the idealized Golden Age; it aspires to redefine the idea of a home, and of making one's own home in the world. In the *Odyssey* one of the major factors in making the homecoming successful is the marital relationship. The homecoming depends on the way Penelope reacts to the stranger and recognizes him as her lost husband. This important factor is also dominant in the role that the woman plays in the construction of the notion of home in *Works and Days*.

If we think of *Works and Days* as a kind of homecoming poem, the ethical significance of a face-to-face encounter between a man and a woman, between a husband and a wife, as in the *Odyssey*, is also necessary here. Hesiod's poem, as we shall see, encourages its reader to turn Pandora into a Penelope. The poet's ethical demand from his reader therefore requires a reconciliation with the woman. We shall return to this point at the end of this chapter.

AMBIGUITIES OF IDENTITY: THE CASE OF BROTHERS

οὐδὲ πατὴρ παίδεσσιν ὁμοίος οὐδέ τι παῖδες
οὐδὲ ξείνος ξεινοδόκῳ καὶ ἑταῖρος ἑταίρῳ,
οὐδὲ κασίγνητος φίλος ἔσσεται, ὥς τὸ πάρος περ.
(*W&D* 182–84)

[Father is not at one (*homoiios*) with his children, nor are the children at one with him. The guest is not at one with his host, and the friend is not at one with his friend. And the brother is no longer the friend as he was in the past.]

The longing for a Golden Age is an expression of an essential absence that is inherent in the human condition. (The interdependence between longing and absence is significant to Plato's theory of *eros*, which we will discuss below.) In *Works and Days* the longing for a Golden Age represents the absence of sameness, or the presence of an apparent dissimilarity and alterity. It is quite clear from his description of the present condition of humanity that Hesiod regards the idea of absolute human homogeneity (relative to one another) to be sheer fantasy. A human sameness based on identical interests and a total sense of affinity is foreign to the post-Golden Age world. Reconciling with the human condition means finding a way to live with alterity. That is why such a considerable part of Hesiod's guide to farming addresses varieties of human relationships that suffer from differences, whether they involve neighbors, friends,

artisans, old people, or youth. Human discord belongs to Hesiod's didactic program, which seeks to help readers accommodate dissimilarity in their relationships.

The Hesiodic present, the Iron Age, is marked by a tragic notion of alterity that characterizes the relationships between parent and child and between siblings. In all cases, a natural bonding that was once inherent in human experience is absent. The golden principle of human relationships, that of being at one with each other, Hesiod calls *homoios*.²³

The current structure of the social world has been disrupted: the most basic human relationships have proven to be unstable and unreliable. The guest and the friend remain strangers. Hospitality and friendship do not create grounds for shared interests and mutual trust. Blood relations are not characterized by intimacy and warmth but more closely resemble the intercourse between strangers. Each human connection involves a cautious interaction and arouses suspicions on both sides regarding the other's true interests. This is especially so in the case of *xeinos*, a guest-friend (183), a term that contains within it the duality between remoteness and affinity. *Xeinos* is not, strictly speaking, a stranger. He is, rather, a stranger who is potentially a friend. Likewise, he is not strictly a friend, since he retains his primal aggressiveness as an outsider. As is typical of the Iron Age, the ambiguous meaning of "friend" and "guest" remains unresolved.

Disputes occupy a central place in Hesiod's didactic poetry.²⁴ He chooses, however, to raise the problem of difference in human relationships by means of the phenomenon of brothers. This is because of the hybrid nature of that relationship. Brothers are at once the same and different. They share the same origins and the same parentage, but they grow up to be different people. They may be in compatible, and they sometimes become bitter rivals. The ambiguity of the fraternal relationship is indicative of what is so problematic about the nature of human relationships in general: the tension between similarity (the universality of the human phenomenon) and alterity (the concrete differences—cultural, gender, economic, and others—that distinguish one person from another). In my view, Hesiod begins *Works and Days* with a representation of a specific fraternal dispute precisely because this relationship is paradigmatic of all human relationships. Moreover, considering the poetic function of the fraternal disparity, it seems that this disputative relationship is the backbone of the didactic epic. In other words, the didactic structure of the poem is neither tied to nor inspired by the Muses. It is formulated and provoked by a disagreement between two brothers.

The uniqueness of the didactic mode is manifest in its being based on a conflictual relationship between instructor and disciple. This makes the relationship between “I” and “other” fundamental to the literary experience created in *Works and Days*. Otherness grounds the communicability of the didactic epic, binding the reader to the author, and Perses to his brother, Hesiod. *Works and Days* expounds on the differences between Hesiod and his brother. The two brothers represent a series of oppositions between diligent and lazy farmer, between poet and beggar,²⁵ and between one who is faithful to his village’s values and another who is attracted to the city’s litigious institutions.²⁶ Hesiod and Perses are not the only brothers to be found in *Works and Days*. Hesiod underscores their polarity by referring to a divine instance of a fraternal dispute, that between Prometheus and Epimetheus. The pairing of intelligent and foolish brothers exemplifies the difference between counselor and counseled and between speaker and listener. As such, the relationship between Prometheus and Epimetheus fills the same didactic role as the dialogue between Hesiod and Perses, a role that, according to Anthony Edwards, is intended “to transform Perses from an *achreios* into an *esthlos*, from a man who keeps no counsel to a man who follows the good counsel of another.”²⁷ Hesiod and Perses, just like Prometheus and Epimetheus, create a structural pattern on which the dialogic relationship between the didactic poet and his addressee is modeled. The didactic epic emphasizes the hierarchical distinction between poet and listener and, in Hesiod’s case, specifically marks the addressee as the Other.

A fraternal relationship imbued with duality and difference is not unique to *Works and Days*. It is common to other mythical and literary treatments of brothers, particularly twin brothers: for example, Herakles and his twin, Iphikles.²⁸ They are the sons of Alkmene, who delivered them together but conceived them on two successive nights, the first shared with Zeus, and the second with her human husband, Amphitryon. Herakles was born from the divine intercourse and Iphikles from the human. Hesiod depicts this pair of twins in the *Shield of Herakles* (48–56) by emphasizing their differences:

ἡ δὲ θεῶν δηθηῖσα καὶ ἀνέρι πολλὸν ἀρίστω
 Θήβῃ ἐν ἑπταπύλῳ διδυμάονε γείνατο παῖδε,
 οὐκ ἐθ’ ὁμὰ φρονέοντε· κασιγνήτω γε μὲν ἦσθη·
 τὸν μὲν χειρότερον, τὸν δ’ αὖ μέγ’ ἀμείνονα φῶτα,
 δεινὸν τε κρατερόν τε, βίην Ἡρακληείην,

τὸν μὲν ὑποδμηθεῖσα κελαινεφεῖ Κρονίῳνι,
 αὐτὰρ Ἰφικλῆα δορυσσόῳ Ἀμφιτρύῳνι·
 κεκριμένην γενεήν, τὸν μὲν βροτῷ ἀνδρὶ μιγεῖσα,
 τὸν δὲ Διὶ Κρονίῳνι, θεῶν σμάντορι πάντων.

[And the lady, submitting to the god, and to the man far best of men in Thebes of the seven gates, bore twin sons whose hearts and spirits were not alike; it is true they were brothers, but the one was a lesser man, and the other a man far greater, a dread man and strong, Herakles the powerful. This one she conceived under the embraces of Zeus, the dark clouded, but the other one, Iphikles, to Amphitryon of the restless spear, seed that was separate; one lying with a mortal man and one with Zeus, son of Kronos, marshal of all the immortal.—Trans. Richmond Lattimore]

As a rule, myths concerning twin brothers reveal a deep disparity that turns their apparent similarity into a sign of the tragic quality of fraternity. In the case of Herakles and Iphikles, their mutual maternal (superficial) origin makes them formally twins, but the inherent difference between divine and human semen dictates a distinctive character and separate destiny. The stories of Herakles and Iphikles, as well as Otos and Ephialtes, Castor and Pollux, and Remus and Romulus, all involve a human mother and a divine father. The examples are also a testament to the ancient conception of twins as constituting a tragic hybrid of the divine and the human. Otos and Ephialtes, the sons of Poseidon and the human Iphimedeia, accidentally kill each other. The Dioskouri, Castor and Pollux, are said in one version of their tale to be of mixed origin. Both are the sons of Leda, but Castor is the son of Leda's human husband, Tyndareus, whereas Pollux is the son of Zeus (Pindar, *Nem.* 10:80–82). Although the immortal Pollux persuades Zeus to grant his mortal brother immortality, the two of them alternate their residence on Olympus and consequently no longer meet.

Remus and Romulus are the twin sons of Mars and the vestal priestess Rhea. Despite their similarity, they develop a great hostility and become political rivals. The element of rivalry and jealousy is also typical of biblical twins such as Cain and Abel and Jacob and Esau. The dissimilarity of biblical twins does not involve divine and human fathers; in the monotheistic version, the fraternal difference emerges through the opposition of the blessed son and the cursed one.

Whereas the theme of similarity in a tragic context works through the difference between divine and human, the comic tradition focuses on the

phenomenon of mistaken identity. Plautine comedy deals with the confusion of a god and a man in *Amphitryon*. But the interaction between identical twin brothers is of particular interest, allowing a psychological analysis of the misguided human tendency to see similar things as identical. The paradigmatic comedy of errors, Plautus's *Menaechmi*, is structured around the tension between identity and difference. Its twins—not identical, but physically similar—were separated in childhood and raised in different cities. The inevitable encounter between them provokes a primal anxiety, the fear of the doppelgänger. The play contrives a continual source of confusion for both brothers and their close companions, none of whom realize that there are actually two Menaechmi in Epidamnus. The plot develops out of the conflict between Menaechmus of Epidamnus, who tries to arrange a day off from his busy routine, and his twin brother, who is visiting from Syracuse and is free of responsibilities. Since Menaechmus of Syracuse looks exactly like his twin brother from Epidamnus, he undeservedly enjoys the pleasures meticulously prepared by his brother in advance. At the end of the play the confusion is resolved by the inevitable meeting between the two, which enables relatives and companions to acknowledge in astonishment the brothers' striking similarity. Here is the slave Messenio's response:

illic homo aut sycophanta aut geminus est frater tuos.
 nam ego hominem hominis similiorem numquam vidi alterum.
 neque aqua aquae nec lacte est lactis, crede mi, usquam similis
 quam hic tui est, toque huius autem; poste eandem patriam ac patrem
 memorat.
 (*Men.* 1087–91)

[That man is either a swindler or your twin brother! I never saw two men look so much alike. You're as hard to tell apart as two drops of water or two drops of milk. And besides, he claims the same father and the same country.—Trans. E. C. Weist and R. W. Hyde]²⁹

The episode describes a self-realization scene: the brothers who were believed to be one are revealed to be two. The significance of this discovery is manifest in the fact that the revelation of similarity—the realization of the twins' almost identical appearance—is actually the appearance, and the proof, of the difference between them. In other words, the discovery of the similarity between one and the other is one and the same

event as the discovery of the difference between the two. The slave struggles with the common error of mistaking both of them for one and the same person. The play moves from a false conception of one and the same person (numerical identity) to a correct conception of a perfect similarity between two different people. Recognizing the twins' identicalness leads, at the same time, to a recognition of them as two different persons. In fact, the surprising message of this recognition scene is not the identity between the brothers but, rather, their nonidentity despite their similarity. The play explores thus the impossibility of perfect identity between two personalities. Moreover, it privileges the value of dissimilarity between the twin brothers. This privileging is an essentially ethical stance, since only recognition of their difference allows the twins to meet face to face, to become acquainted with each other, and to learn from each other's life experiences.³⁰

THE LOSS OF SAMENESS AND THE BIRTH OF EROS

All myths concerning twins emphasize their differences. In this sense, these myths are related to the myth of the Golden Age, which negates the perfect identity of gods and men. The phenomenon of identical twins likewise represents an impossibility: the desire for two to become one. Consider, for example, the erotic connotation of Plautus's metaphoric language regarding the brothers' similarity. The imagery of two identical drops of water or milk that he uses to describe their close resemblance is typical of descriptions of lovers' desire to become one and the same. Such erotic aspirations are essential to Plato's theory of love in the *Symposium*. The lovers' desire grows from a fundamental human experience: the experience of absence, the other side of which is a longing for identity with another. In Plato this form of desire is rooted in nostalgia for a Golden Age.

In the *Symposium* Aristophanes first raises the relationship between *eros* and the experience of loss and absence, a relationship taken up and elaborated philosophically by Socrates. Aristophanes contributes to the discussion by inquiring into the mythological meaning of *eros*. And so his speech offers a variation on the Hesiodic myth of the Golden Age.

δεῖ δὲ πρῶτον ὑμᾶς μαθεῖν τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν καὶ τὰ παθήματα αὐτῆς· ἥ γὰρ πάλαι ἡμῶν φύσις οὐχ αὐτὴ ἦν ἥπερ νῦν, ἀλλ' ἄλλοία.
(*Symp.* 189d5–6)

[We need first to learn human nature and what it has suffered. Since once upon a time our nature was not as it is now, but of another kind.]

The “once upon a time” pattern by which Aristophanes begins his mythopoetic speech is typical of a mythological narrative. It marks a point of departure in the history of humanity. The Golden Age formula signifies a drastic transition—a decline—from the fantasy of the perfect human condition that is typical of other Golden Age myths (compare, for instance, the expulsion from paradise in the book of Genesis and the creation of the first woman in Hesiodic poetry).

Aristophanes’ mythopoesis is etiological. Wondering “how we all came to be what we are today” leads to an examination of the nature of *eros*. In other words, the origin of *eros* can explain our own nature as erotic human beings. Aristophanes’ rhetorical strategy is to tie *eros* to human nature by positing two inseparable questions. Explaining the meaning of *eros*, then, tells us what a human being is, and vice versa. According to Aristophanes, humanity’s origins were completely different from its present condition. In contrast to the current division into male and female genders, ancient humans had three sexes. Each of these three different kinds of human was a dual being; that is, each had a doubled body. They were self-sufficient, perfect. However, this human perfection, so characteristic of the Golden Age, provoked arrogance, which was ultimately punished by Zeus.³¹ To reduce the power of humans, Zeus decided that each would be split into two separate beings. This explains the present state of things, with two sexes, male and female, but three varieties of sexuality—two kinds of homoerotic and one heterosexual love, all determined by one’s spherical origins.

Aristophanes does not say much about the state of mind of the spherical creatures. Did they conceive of themselves as one or as a couple? Were they a divided or a univocal self? It is hard to tell, especially because Aristophanes’ description focuses on the creatures’ physical experience. However, his depiction of their extraordinary physical competence reveals a perfect control over bodily gestures and a singular moving force.

ἔπειτα ὅλον ἦν ἐκάστου τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ εἶδος στρογγύλον, νῶτον καὶ πλευρὰς κύκλῳ ἔχον, χεῖρας δὲ τέτταρας εἶχε, καὶ σκέλη τὰ ἴσα ταῖς χερσίν, καὶ πρόσωπα δὲ ἑπ’ αὐχένι κυκλοτερεῖ, ὅμοια πάντα· κεφαλὴν δ’ ἐπ’ ἀμφοτέροις τοῖς προσώποις ἐναντίοις κειμένοις μίαν, καὶ ὥτα τέτταρα, καὶ αἰδοῖα δύο, καὶ τὰλλα πάντα ὥς ἀπὸ τούτων ἂν τις εἰκάσειεν. ἐπορεύετο δὲ καὶ ὀρθὸν ὥσπερ νῦν, ὁποτέρῳσε

βουληθείη· καὶ ὁπότε ταχὺ ὀρμήσειεν θεῖν, ὥσπερ οἱ κυβιστῶντες καὶ εἰς ὀρθὸν τὰ σκέλη περιφερόμενοι κυβιστώσι κύκλῳ, ὅκτῳ τότε οὐσι τοῖς μέλεσιν ἀπεριδόμενοι ταχὺ ἔφεροντο κύκλῳ.
(*Symp.* 189e–90a)

[Again, the form of each human being as a whole was round, with back and sides forming a circle, but it had four arms and an equal number of legs, and two faces exactly alike on a cylindrical neck; there was a single head for both faces, which faced in opposite directions, and four ears and two sets of pudenda, and one can imagine all the rest from this. It also traveled upright just as now, in whatever direction it wished; and whenever they took off in a swift run, they brought their legs around straight and somersaulted as tumblers do, and then, with eight limbs to support them, they rolled in a swift circle.—Trans. R. E. Allen]³²

Close observation of the physiognomic structure of the three spherical beings reveals additional ambiguities. Two features are crucial to our investigation: the two faces were turned in opposite directions, and their genitals faced outward.³³ This means, first, that these creatures had no idea what their other face looked like, and, second, that they could not see the other's genitals. The latter point is of special interest for the androgynous pair, for there was no sexual difference in the case of the doubled male spherical creature or the doubled female. Although the androgynous being exhibited a heterosexual pair of genitals, the male and female halves could not be aware of their sexual difference, since their eyes could never fix on the other's front.

It is interesting to note that the androgynous creature is the only one of the three mythical human kinds to reveal any sign of divergence in what were otherwise physically identical doubled beings. Aristophanes accentuates the heterogeneous nature of the androgynous genus, the male-female creature, when he considers the material origins of the three beings. Whereas the male-male creature originated in the sun, and the female-female creature in the earth, the androgynous creature was derived from the moon, which has a share in both the sun and the earth. Although the man-woman genus is considered to be the weakest and lowliest of the three (*Symp.* 191d6–e2), its sexual nature, its heterosexuality, is the most prevalent kind, more common than the two forms of homoerotic passion. In other words, the heritage of sexual difference inherited from the male-female creature, rather than the sexual sameness of the male-male and

female-female creatures, has become the most typical form of human sexuality. Another way of saying this is to observe that Aristophanes privileges homoerotic *eros* over heterosexual *eros* precisely because homoerotic love retains the memory and fantasy of sameness more than heterosexual love does.

For Aristophanes it is important to underscore the identity between the two halves of the primordial human creatures. The theme of identity extends also to the most idiosyncratic physiognomic element of the human body, the face. Hence, the two faces of these spherical beings are described by Aristophanes as *homoia pante*, "the same in every way" (*Symp.* 190a1). This means that each of the three spherical creatures had two identical faces. But were they conscious of this identity? It is most likely that they were not. For, as observed above, the location of their doubled face prevented them from engaging in a face-to-face encounter, making it unlikely that the doubled humans were at all aware of their sameness. In contrast, awareness of their similarity became possible in the dramatic recognition scene that followed their separation. This was the first time in the life of the spherical creatures that they faced each other and astonishingly recognized their physical identity. One can see that their physical identity contributed to their self-realization as new sexual beings, inciting a vain desire to merge in to the other and again become the One that they had once been.

Aristophanes makes a distinction between the erotic natures of the ancient split beings and present-day humans. Unlike our ancestors, we have no visual recollection of our lost other. We also have no physical experience of what it means to be a whole made of two separate beings.³⁴ Lovemaking, as Aristophanes argues, is an enigmatic and remote reflection of the perfect spherical condition that has been lost. Nevertheless, we do search in love for a lost twin. In our life, too, *eros* still means a longing for a lost half, a desire to become whole: *tou holou oun te e pithumia* (*Symp.* 192e). It would seem, then, that to love in the present context of human experience is to desire to overcome the inherent difference between two beings. To put it another way, in a love relationship we want to be accepted and be recognized for what we lack, and we wish that lack to be complemented by the other. In this sense, the erotic condition of the present world acknowledges and legitimates the ineluctable difference that exists in each coupling. This is not a conventional interpretation, however. Aristophanes' myth is more commonly understood to be a rudimentary introduction to romantic and metaphysical conceptions of love.³⁵ It is

traditionally conceived by aspiring romantic lovers as a validation of their union, underlining their belief in the metaphysical dimension of their relationship—that is, the determinist nature of their encounter. Platonic *anamnesis*, or the theory of recollection, provides a theoretical support for such typical expressions as “We were meant for each other and fell in love at first sight.” And so the myth of the origin of *eros* is open to two interpretations. One seeks to cultivate identity in the couple’s love life. The other acknowledges the significance of difference in the love relationship.

The fact that Aristophanes’ myth can be read in such opposing ways suggests that our erotic experience is by nature a contradictory one. Being in love means both that we aspire to experience an ultimate satisfaction (symbiosis with the other) and that we accept the futility of such a desire.³⁶ This makes Aristophanes’ speech a tragicomic treatment of love. On the one hand, he expresses skepticism about the lovers’ doomed aspiration to merge into a whole. On the other hand, he rather optimistically assumes that although we are incapable of merging and making one out of two, we can nevertheless grow similar to each other over time. This allows the comedian Aristophanes to forge a comic ending to a tragic myth, providing a pragmatic solution to a problem that is tragically unsolvable. *Eros*, according to Aristophanes, is a relationship that needs time and cultivation:

λέγω δὲ οὖν ἔγωγε καθ’ ἀπάντων καὶ ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν, ὅτι οὕτως
 ἂν ἡμῶν τὸ γένος εὐδαιμον γένοιτο, εἰ ἐκτελέσαιμεν τὸν ἔρωτα καὶ τῶν
 παιδικῶν τῶν αὐτοῦ ἕκαστος τύχοι εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν ἀπελθὼν φύσιν.
 εἰ δὲ τοῦτο ἄριστον, ἀναγκάϊον καὶ τῶν νῦν παρόντων τὸ τούτου
 ἔγγυτάτω ἄριστον εἶναι· τοῦτο δ’ ἐστὶ παιδικῶν τυχεῖν κατὰ νοῦν
 αὐτῷ πεφυκότων·

(*Symp.* 193c)

[But I’m saying about everyone, men and women alike, that this is how our race would become happy, if we should fulfill our love and each meet with his own darling boy, returning to his ancient nature. If this is best, then necessarily what is nearest to it under present circumstances is also best: that is, to meet a darling boy who naturally would become likeminded.]³⁷

In the epilogue to the myth of *eros*, Aristophanes reexamines the question of how to satisfy (even partially) the inborn desire to become one with the other. This is done through education and play: love is about learning and assimilating the nature of the other. In love we learn to be like the

other. And in love we teach our darlings to “become likeminded.” Aristophanes approaches love in a manner that ultimately ridicules the fantasy of a miraculous, spontaneous falling in love. Rather, he calls on us to choose as lovers those who would be inclined to realize their fantasy of sameness in us.

At this point I return to Hesiod’s *Works and Days* in order to examine the poem’s influence on the *Symposium*. I believe that the Platonic myth is significantly inspired by the Hesiodic mode of thought. My interpretation of Aristophanes’ myth as one that commemorates the unavoidable experience of alterity in the love relationship harks back to Hesiod’s *Works and Days*. Aristophanes’ exhortation to base the love relationship on education and imitation, in order to create similarity between lovers, can be interpreted in light of the didactic program of *Works and Days*. Hesiod considers the lack of innate, harmonious bonding one of Iron Age’s greatest flaws. Hence, human relationships become a matter of education in *Works and Days*, requiring constant effort and attention. The poem’s ethical program compares the maintenance of human relationships to the cultivation of land. Both require constant toil and attention, as a burning fire needs to be regularly fed with fuel. The need to foster human relationships implies that every relationship is governed by the principle of alterity. Hesiod believes, however, that proper treatment will lead to reciprocity, mutual consideration, and friendship. In this sense, Hesiod and the Platonic Aristophanes share the belief that difference underlies every human relationship, and both welcome the possibility of turning differences into similarities. The transformational process of making the other a benevolent conversant is fundamental to the didactic genre and to the philosophical dialogue as well. In turning a hostile brother and an adversarial audience into compliant and responsive listeners, Hesiod turns poetry into a language of communication that forges a dialogue between very different people.

THE DIDACTIC IMPERATIVE: LEARN THE OTHER

The myth of the first woman is the *locus classicus* for making difference and alterity the elementary concepts of our being. Pandora marks the feminine as an Other. She is the figure for the ethical difference between masculinity and femininity. Yet I am less interested here in this difference than in the wider significance of feminine otherness. I suggest that the myth of the first woman opens for us the possibility of exploring the meaning of what is human. This makes the myth of the first woman etiological—albeit in an indirect manner—and in this sense similar to Aristophanes’

myth of *eros*. Just as Aristophanes' account of *eros* ultimately provides an account of sexual difference, so does the myth of Pandora open a window into the human condition.

The myth of Pandora and the myth of the Five Ages are closely related, and their interrelationship determines how we interpret the myth of the first woman. More specifically, the myth of the Five Ages provides the narratological framework for interpreting the myth of Pandora. Together, the two myths raise the issue of gender difference, which is a central theme in Pandora's myth and a direct outcome of the mythical split between "present" and "past" forms of life, the principal subject of the myth of the Five Ages. In this respect, the creation of the first woman should not be understood solely within the thematic boundaries of her story, merely as retribution for Prometheus's theft. Reading her myth in the context of the end of the Golden Age enables us to see her role as a signifier of difference. More to the point, the first woman represents the separation forced on men between their mythical status as demigods and their present position as lowly mortals. Pandora marks the end of the symbiotic relationship between men and gods and between men and the world. At the same time, she marks the dawn of a new era characterized by disharmony in human relationships.

Woman fills a cultural role in *Works and Days*. She is a sign of the unnaturalness of being embodied in labor, cultivation, and language. Woman represents the reality principle that governs the cultural world. The text uses her figure to commemorate what men have been deprived of—namely, a legendary lifespan saturated with pleasure and abundance, an unambiguous way of life reflected in the transparency of language and morality.³⁸

Yet the relationship of the Pandora episode to a didactic epic primarily concerned with farming and agriculture is not self-evident. What is therefore her significance for the world of agriculture? How does she fit into the new relationship between man and the world? Hesiod's depiction of his present age demonstrates how men separated the natural world from its divine and pristine origins. In comparison with its cosmological beginning, the cultivated world no longer reflects the vividness of the divine sphere. Now men perceive the land through their interests and needs: the land has become a symbol of profits and useful resources awaiting men. After the Golden Age, men can no longer comprehend the world as a natural integral part of their existence.

As the world ceases to be one with man, as man loses his embryonic bond with the world, otherness becomes a crucial part of man's experience.

His condition is no longer that of “being part of” but rather of “standing in relation to.” The structure of a relationship (between two external terms) replaces a primordial golden symbiosis. This is where the first woman is needed. The feminine is not simply an external negation of men’s homology, but is instead the grounds of a dialogical existence. The feminine marks the form of a relationship as a crucial aspect of life. And thus, in Hesiod, the whole project of constituting for man a proper dwelling in the world is articulated under the sign of this relationship: the prescribed relationship between man and his world receives its initial thematization via the image of the response to the first woman.

Nature no longer supplies the embryonic home of its own accord but is cultivated by men and technically coerced into providing a home and nourishment. The need to cultivate the earth is structurally analogous to the obligation to nourish and satisfy the woman. Hence, nature is the Other, as is the land, and likewise the woman. Sexual bonding between men and women reveals the same problematics as the relationship between man and nature. Sexual bonding is not natural and spontaneous. The relationship between man and woman lacks natural intimacy, and their initial interactions never run smoothly. Men and women struggle to overcome the frustration that issues from being unable to instantly be close to one another.³⁹ Hesiod’s didactic imperative is, hence, to know the Other.

The Socratic Pandora

Pandora is at the center of an otherness that is omnipresent in the literary text.¹ In Hesiod's *Works and Days* her otherness is, first and foremost, a sign of a poetics that recognizes its finitude and embraces its human origins. Pandora marks the unbridgeable distance that separates the human language from a pure language of sameness, the language of the gods. At the same time, the image of the first woman has another, somewhat opposed, meaning in the Hesiodic text. Pandora not only threatens the cohesiveness of poetic language; she also represents the need to domesticate, to cultivate, a dimension of otherness that will support the very possibility of textuality.

A text's meaning is made possible by the existence of a tension between two opposing movements. On the one hand, the text must contain a dimension of otherness and difference that opens up its language to new meanings. Without such difference a text remains tautological and trivial, unable to carve a unique identity in the space of language. On the other hand, otherness cannot constitute the grounds for conveying meaning. Rather, the communicability of a text—its legibility—depends on a regulative principle of sameness. A text is a text only if it functions within shared horizons of language and meaning. This makes the text both singular and, at the same time, always part of a common field of textuality, always belonging to a family of texts.

In Hesiod's *Works and Days* these two opposing orientations are joined in the person of the first woman. The image of femininity thus assumes a dual appearance in the didactic epic, being a sign of both difference and the overcoming of difference. The feminine, in other words, serves as a metaphor for two textual layers that are often at odds with one another

but which generate a tension that is essential to the formation of the didactic epic.

These two aspects of the feminine find expression in two traits assigned to the figure of Pandora: the deceptive seducer and the virginal bride. While the image of woman as *femme fatale* inspires the didactic project, its mirror image is critical for realizing the ethical impulse proposed by the epic. Whereas Pandora's seductive force reflects men's separation from the Golden Age and their banishment to an alien world, the figure of the obedient bride points to the possibility of resolution and a symbolic homecoming. Hence, as Hesiod promotes the image of the silent and innocent maiden as a suitable candidate for marriage, an alternative conception of the feminine emerges.

As I shall show, *Works and Days* issues from a tension between two poetic forms that I describe as a "poetics of marriage" and a "poetics of eros."² These two poetic modes are the prototypes of two distinct generic discourses: the didactic and the philosophical. Described in a more schematic fashion: the didactic text operates under the sign of the obedient married woman; it presupposes a form of readership that fully consents to the text's authority. The philosophical text, on the other hand, can never fully reveal the source of its authority. Nevertheless, it tempts the reader to pursue an unknown path that holds out a promise.

In this chapter, the opposition between the didactic and the philosophical text is examined through the opposition between the poetics of marriage appearing in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* and the poetics of eros appearing in Plato's *Symposium*. Against the background of the didactic text, the chapter explores the unique ties between the poetics of the philosophical text and the feminine. My aim is to show that the heritage of the Hesiodic Pandora is intrinsic to the formation of the philosophical poetics of eros, and in particular to the Platonic figure of Socrates.

WOMAN IS THE IDEAL LISTENER

Preoccupied with the fundamental experience of difference that plagues the relationship between men and women, Hesiod inquires into the traits of an ideal wife. According to Hesiod, there is only one way to enter into a good marriage: "Marry a maiden so that you may teach her good manners, and better to marry one who is your neighbor" (*W&D* 699–700). Hesiod recommends a marriage based on a hierarchical relationship between a mature, ethical husband and an innocently ignorant maiden who is to assume the role of an obedient disciple. And yet, because the woman

remains largely unknown to Hesiod, thereby possibly concealing a potential evil, he advises his readers to choose a neighbor as a bride. This will ensure a more successful match—that is, a marriage with a good woman (*agathe gyne*, *W&D* 702–3). Familiarity with her family and a common social background, together with identical local interests, will further ease the couple's initial estrangement and provide the ground for their future relationship.

Establishing mutual interests in a marriage does not imply the existence of equality between the two partners. On the contrary, man and woman are integrated into a hierarchical relationship. The former assumes the role of educator and establishes the interests that will be shared by the couple. Creating mutuality, then, entails no consideration of the feminine perspective—in fact, such consideration is dismissed out of hand by the husband because of his wife's immaturity. Her perspective is acknowledged only after it has been integrated into his vision and merged within it. The unwritten marital contract Hesiod describes is not only between husband and wife, for it shapes the poet's understanding of the contract-like bond between the didactic author and his reader. The hierarchical connection between a husband and wife thus serves a poetic function—namely, explicating the relationship between the didactic poet and Perses, his intended audience.

In what way is Hesiod's audience—the fictional image of a listener that he constructs—analogue to a bride? Like that of the immature bride, Perses' perspective is not truly integrated into the text. The didactic epic disciplines Perses and silences him. He is present only in his absence. While Hesiod's poetic choices are explicitly discussed, Perses' remain obscure.³ We assume, simply on the basis of the disparity between the brothers, that Perses takes a distinct poetic stance.⁴ And yet his actual views on poetry are never in fact represented. *Works and Days* thus privileges the poet's perspective over that of the listener. Nevertheless, despite the precedence accorded the poet's voice, Hesiod's didactic poetry seeks to overcome the distance between the brothers. The didactic means of achieving that goal is certainly not founded on equality; the didactic epic does not acknowledge the autonomous presence of Perses. Rather, in wishing to transform Perses into the very image of himself, Hesiod announces his paternalistic disposition toward his audience. "You have it, Perses, within your power to become a little bit like me" seems to be the subtext of Hesiod's poetry. Didactic poetry aspires to put Perses into Hesiod's shoes. This means that the didactic epic's ideal listener is a pliant figure ready to be assimilated into the author's vision.⁵ By the same token, the ideal wife

is imagined to be a *tabula rasa* prepared to receive the mark of her husband's education.⁶ The male ideal is to marry a woman whose otherness does not yet pose a serious obstacle to her assimilation into the world of her husband.⁷

Hesiod does not, however, offer a specific pedagogical program for turning the woman into a beneficial mate. This task was undertaken and completed in the fourth century BCE by Xenophon, whose didactic *Oeconomicus* belongs to the Hesiodic tradition. Xenophon's prose treatise employs and develops a variety of themes and images originating in Hesiodic poetry, but provides an important complement. It addresses the problem of sameness in marriage by promulgating a systematic educational program for a young wife, based on conversations with her husband. Xenophon's text contributes to the poetics of marriage as it develops the notion, already present in Hesiod's didactic epic, of an analogy between marriage and the didactic text. More specifically, by examining their relationship between an educating husband and his feminine disciple, Xenophon connects the figure of the newlywed wife to that of an ideal listener (reader).

Consider, for example, the portrait of the young wife as presented by the ideal husband, Ischomachus, to Socrates. His description depicts a successful product of Ischomachus's educational program:

καὶ τί ἄν, ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐπισταμένην αὐτὴν παρέλαβον, ἥ ἔτη μὲν οὐπω πεντεκαίδεκα γεγονυῖα ἦλθε πρὸς ἐμέ, τὸν δ' ἔμπροσθεν χρόνον ἔζη ὑπὸ πολλῆς ἐπιμελείας ὅπως ὡς ἐλάχιστα μὲν ὄψοιτο, ἐλάχιστα δ' ἀκούσοιτο, ἐλάχιστα δ' ἔροιτο; οὐ γὰρ ἀγαπητόν σοι δοκεῖ εἶναι, εἰ μόνον ἦλθεν ἐπισταμένη ἔρια παραλαβοῦσα ἱμάτιον ἀποδεῖξαι, καὶ ἑωρακυῖα ὡς ἔργα ταλάσια θεραπαίναίς δίδοται; ἐπεὶ τὰ γε ἀμφὶ γαστέρα, ἔφη, πάνυ καλῶς, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἦλθε πεπαιδευμένη· ὅπερ μέγιστον ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ παίδευμα εἶναι καὶ ἀνδρὶ καὶ γυναικί.

(Xenophon, *Oec.* 7.5–6)

[“What could she have known when I took her as my wife, Socrates? She was not yet fifteen when she came to me, and had spent her previous years under careful supervision so that she might see and hear and speak as little as possible. Don't you think it was adequate if she came to me knowing only how to take wool and produce a cloak, and had seen how spinning tasks are allocated to the slaves? And besides, she had been very well trained to control her appetites, Socrates,” he said, “and I think that sort of training is most important for man and woman alike.”—Trans. Sarah B. Pomeroy]⁸

Parents have the duty of preparing their daughter to be a receptive and compliant bride. This means that she should be knowledgeable of as little as possible.⁹ It is enough that she know one kind of craft: the art of weaving, considered essential to the bride's preparatory education. Weaving teaches the bride the meaning of productivity and introduces her (through the division of weaving labor) to the hierarchy between freeborn women and domestic slaves.

According to Ischomachus, a well-brought-up young woman of fifteen should already have a restrained appetite. Such self-control over her abdomen satisfies Hesiod's notion of the good wife (*W&D* 702–3). In both texts, physical self-restraint is considered a feminine virtue, principally manifested in matters of food and sex.¹⁰ The first stage of her education is undertaken early in childhood, by the bride's mother, who teaches her to moderate her appetite. Only after this elementary stage of self-moderation (*sophrosyne*) has been fully internalized is the girl ready to be under the supervision of her husband and to acquire self-control in the area in which she is destined to become an authority—namely, the household.¹¹

Although the bride's education at her husband's hands requires some degree of preparation by her parents, she is practically innocent of all knowledge when she enters marriage. Separated from the world during her childhood, the bride has barely been exposed to the social and cultural dimensions of life. The young woman is symbolically presented as blind, deaf, and mute—that is, as someone who has not experienced the world through her senses (*Oec.* 7.5). The husband's task is thus to open her eyes so that she sees the world, as well as to make her listen to the voices of others. It is important to receive a wife whose sensory perception is not yet developed. This will allow the husband to gradually construct her perspective so that it becomes tied to his. And having barely been exposed to the opinions of others, the young woman is considered deaf. Her deafness makes her eager to hear her instructor's voice, and she develops a special ear for her husband, becoming his avid listener. And as the wife is furnished with the capacities of perceiving and listening, she is also allowed (within the confines of convention) to become a speaker and to gain a voice of her own (*Oec.* 7.37–38).¹²

In this respect, the husband creates his wife as a self-conscious subject by taming and instructing her. Paradoxically, as the didactic text successfully completes the integration of the wife into the husband's world, she is allowed to recognize sexual differences. The wife's assimilation of her

husband's masculine worldview is a sign that her otherness is no longer a threat. The process of taming the feminine culminates in the wife's recognition of her distinctive feminine nature:

διὰ δὲ τὸ τὴν φύσιν μὴ πρὸς πάντα ταῦτ' ἀμφοτέρων εὖ πεφυκέναι, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ δεόνται μᾶλλον ἀλλήλων καὶ τὸ ζευγος ὠφελιμώτερον ἑαυτῷ γεγένηται, ἃ τὸ ἕτερον ἐλλείπεται τὸ ἕτερον δυνάμενον.
(*Oec.* 7.28)

[So, because they are not equally well endowed with all the same natural attitudes, they are consequently more in need of each other, and the bond is more beneficial to the couple, since one is capable where the other is deficient.]¹³

According to Hesiod and Xenophon, the joining of male and female means facing their resolvable differences that exist between them. Both writers define a successful marriage as one that bonds the two sexes around the ideal of sameness. At the same time, this very aspiration for identity reflects the reality of sexual difference that governs their union.

Xenophon's didactic treatise turns the woman into an ideal listener; her otherness is suppressed. In this sense, the didactic text is imbued with the violent and oppressive dimension of cultivation—that is, culture. In learning the art of listening, the woman is forced to surrender her otherness. The husband's language, like didactic poetry, entreats the wife to become more like him. It teaches her how to embrace the husband's world. We cannot regard the husband's language as seductive.¹⁴

THE NAKED TRUTH AND THE ADORNED LIE

As is typical of the poetics of marriage, Xenophon's didactic treatise is, in fact, a misogynist text. As we shall see, a eulogy for the "decent woman" always implies a defamation of the "deceitful woman." Ischomachus, the ideal husband and Xenophon's *alter ego*, is responsible for the misogynist subtext.¹⁵ The husband's didactic attempt to establish common ground between man and wife issues from deep prejudices concerning the inferior nature of women. According to Xenophon, the woman's fundamental character is based on her innate insatiability, thus echoing the figure of Pandora in *Theogony*. But, more interestingly, his conception of women's nature is also reminiscent of the figure of Pandora in *Works and Days*, where she is constructed in terms of the opposition between nature and

artifact. The first woman is an artifact. There is nothing natural in her figure; Pandora is foreign to nature. Yet, at the same time, it is natural for her to be artificial. In a paradoxical manner, the artificial and adorned belong to Pandora's nature. Hence, in implying that there is an intrinsic connection between the young girl and the archetypal woman, Xenophon is saying that the girl's natural inclination is to become a seducer like Pandora, and that she can escape this predicament only if disciplined by the ideal principles of marriage. A good marriage and an instructive husband allow for a transformation of the naturally artificial woman into a wholly "natural" one.

In underscoring the importance of the passage, achieved in matrimony, from the artificial to the natural, the ideal husband, Ischomachus, represents Xenophon's literary taste. For Xenophon, the natural woman provides an image of the ideal form of a text. This kind of text, purist in essence, lacks adornments and consists of a self-transparent language.

The instruction scene in Xenophon's eulogy for the married couple celebrates a successful encounter between the two sexes. Marriage creates a home, a place where differences are suppressed and harmony and similarity are sought after. Marriage thus becomes an institutional form of the human aspiration for sameness. According to Ischomachus, the ideal of sameness is the goal of the physical union between husband and wife. However, *eros* and sameness are apparently incompatible terms.

συνεληλύθαμεν, ὃ γύναι, ὥς καὶ τῶν σωμάτων κοινωνήσουντες ἀλλήλοις ("Wife, were we not joined in marriage to share our bodies in intercourse with each other too?" Oec.10.4). With this rhetorical query Ischomachus opens the discussion of sex. To be sure, he does so with honesty and directness. Yet (or should I say hence?) his erotic discussion is devoid of any seductive force. Why is that? Because the didactic tradition to which Xenophon's text belongs views marriage as constituting an antidote to *eros*. Xenophon's text thus strives to create a split between marriage and the erotic experience. Such a split is not always required: consider, for example, the biblical saying: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gen. 2.24). The author of Genesis views marriage between man and woman as a corollary of their primal erotic discovery. In this sense, the difference between the biblical text and Xenophon's didactic text is significant. The biblical connection between husband and wife is essentially erotic in nature precisely because the text emphasizes the married couple's corporeal union in the context of their betrayal of God.¹⁶ Sex is the forbidden fruit of marriage.

Moreover, the sexual innocence of paradise was marked by their nakedness. Now, after their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, man and woman are dressed for the first time in the “garments of skins” that God has provided them (Gen. 3.21). That is to say, the covered body, and not nudity, is the sign of their eroticism. Adam and Eve would fully discover the secret of their sexuality only when the corporeal source of their shame had been covered in clothing. The biblical narrative constructs the dichotomy between sexual ignorance and sexual knowledge through the opposition between nudity and dress. While the laws of the Garden of Eden maintain sexual innocence, marriage transgresses them and legitimizes sexual knowledge.

The dichotomy between nudity and clothing is central to Ischomachus’s discussion and to Xenophon’s textual notions. Acting in a tradition of anti-erotic discourses, Ischomachus seeks to introduce the ethics of nudity into the sexual relationship with his wife. He wants, in other words, to retain sexual innocence within the framework of a sexual relationship. When his wife approaches him seductively, wearing makeup and platform shoes, he reacts with disgust and begins to sermonize:

ὦ γύναι, μήτε ψιμυθίου μήτε ἐγχούσης χρώματι ἥδεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ τῷ σῶϊ, ἀλλ’ ὥσπερ οἱ θεοὶ ἐποίησαν ἵπποις μὲν ἵππους, βουσί δὲ βούς ἥδιστον, προβάτοις δὲ πρόβατα, οὕτω καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀνθρώπου σῶμα καθαρὸν οἶονται ἥδιστον εἶναι· αἱ δ’ ἀπάται αὐταὶ τοὺς μὲν ἕξω πως δύναιнт’ ἂν ἀνεξελέγκτως ἐξαπατᾶν, συνόντας δὲ αἰεὶ ἀνάγκη ἀλίσκεσθαι, ἂν ἐπιχειρῶσιν ἐξαπατᾶν ἀλλήλους. ἡ γὰρ ἐξ εὐνῆς ἀλίσκονται ἐξανιστάμενοι πρὶν παρασκευάσασθαι ἢ ὑπὸ ἰδρώτος ἐλέγχονται ἢ ὑπὸ δακρύων βασανίζονται ἢ ὑπὸ λουτροῦ ἀληθινῶς καταπτεύθησαν.

(*Oec.* 10.8)

[I said, “Wife, you must understand that I too do not prefer the color of white powder and rouge to your own, but just as the gods have made horses most attractive to horses, cattle to cattle, and sheep to sheep, so human beings consider the human body most attractive when it is unadorned. These tricks might perhaps succeed in deceiving strangers without being detected, but those who spend their whole lives together are bound to be found out if they try to deceive each other. Either they are found out when they get out of bed before they have got dressed, or they are detected by a drop of sweat, or convicted when they cry, or are revealed as they truly are when they take a bath.”]

Ischomachus conceives of the ideal relationship between husband and wife as one of honesty and openness. This moral idealization has a textual significance. Adopting the ideology of sameness, Ischomachus positions simplicity in opposition to extravagance. In teaching a wife how to rid herself of the allure of (feminine) beauty and how to adopt instead a plainer look, Xenophon teaches his readers the value of the undorned style of writing.¹⁷ Simplicity helps Ischomachus to realize his ideal vision of physical union within matrimony: intimacy between two people who see each other strictly as they are. For Ischomachus, matrimonial sex should be governed by the principles of truthfulness and transparency.¹⁸ Only strangers use the seductive tactics of lovers. As a corollary, only lovers behave like strangers who are preoccupied with their external appearance.

Developing mutual trust requires that the wife embrace the ethical codes of a natural appearance, which is the aesthetic goal of those who conceive of appearance as a mere externality. Being the unnatural outer skin of human nature, appearance is considered a sign of immorality. Ischomachus's preference for the undorned human body is typical of conservative morality. He belongs to a long tradition that identifies naturalness, transparency, and nudity with truthfulness. The identification of the naked body with truth is closely tied to the Greek visualization of gender difference. As Andrew Stewart shows in his study of representations of the body in ancient Greece, men are usually naked in Greek art, whereas women are usually clothed.¹⁹ Nakedness is a differentiating device. It characterizes the "natural" masculine sex, while clothing is the sign of the constructed feminine sex.²⁰

The didactic tradition aspires to create women according to the precept of the masculine idealization of nakedness. Instructors like Hesiod and Xenophon wish to remove women's clothing and force on them the ethos of naturalness. This masculine aspiration lies at the root of the opposition between woman as wife and woman as seducer. Hesiod, as we shall soon see, constructs the opposition between the two by means of the imagery of nakedness and dress. This opposition was enthusiastically adopted by Roman moralists, who labored to define feminine virtue through its natural appearance. Plautus, for example, in a parody of the Roman puritan ideology,²¹ reproduces the ethical standards that define feminine beauty in the following clichés:

Pulchra mulier nuda erit quam purpurata pulchrior:
 poste nequiquam exornata est bene, si morata est male.

Pulchrum ornatum turpes mores peius caeno continunt.
 Nam si pulchra est nimis ornata est.
 (*Mostellaria* 289–92)

[A beautiful woman will be more beautiful naked than extravagantly dressed. Hence, if she is of bad moral character, she has in vain richly adorned herself. Ugly behavior defiles more than dirt an honored beauty. Therefore, if a woman is beautiful she is already more than enough adorned.]

Beauty manifests itself more easily in the naked body than in a body encumbered by clothing (contrasting *nuda* with *purpurata*). Nudity is, moreover, identified with moral conduct. “Nude” implies simplicity and naturalness and high moral standards. As both types of women—the *morata*, the well-behaved woman, and the immoral woman, *morata male*—are adorned, the contrast between them is based on the distinction between internal and external kinds of adornments. While the *morata* is adorned from the inside, the adornment of the *exornata* is seen as an indecent externality, a superfluity and, hence, a superficial addition.²²

The Roman *morata* and the *morata male* are derivations of Hesiod’s two images of femininity. These are images of maidens who will soon become wives. While the ideal (anonymous) bride is naked, the deceitful bride (Pandora) appears in a wedding dress.

THE WINTER MAIDEN (*W&D* 519–23)

Hesiod describes the interior of a country house during a cold winter. His description penetrates the undiscovered shadowy parts of the house where the naked maiden, who “knows nothing of Aphrodite,” washes her body with oil. The naked maiden is domestic and is therefore hidden from the public eye. She is innocent of all erotic knowledge, a helpless and gentle creature who requires male protection. She may be considered to be, as Richard Hamilton has argued, a civilized improvement, a sublimated version of the primordial woman.²³ Contrasted with Pandora, the portrait of the naked girl washing herself provides an image of feminine innocence, which is recommended to men as their preferred object of desire. This gives the episode of the naked woman a specific role within Hesiod’s edifying text. The didactic author offers his male reader a gift in exchange for the divine gift given to men at the beginning of his poem. Hesiod teaches that man can be released from the dangerous trap that is Pandora’s gift once he finds a proper substitute: he needs to replace Pandora with

a harmless naked maiden who promises innocence, loyalty, and security within the home. Our attention is directed, however, to the antithesis of the naked woman, the clothed woman, the one who embodies the core of male anxiety.

THE DRESSED WOMAN

Hesiod's admonitions to his reader regarding the dangers of feminine seduction are directly concerned with the coquettishly dressed woman. μὴδὲ γυνή σε νόον πυγαστόλος ἑξαπατάτω: "Do not let the tightly dressed [pugostolos] woman tempt your mind," he warns (W&D 373). This danger is, of course, signaled in the image of Pandora, clad as she is in girdle and veil, decked out with jewelries and garlands—the appearance of a typical Greek bride. Why does this image of Pandora leave the reader unsettled? Why does Pandora's maidenhood connote danger rather than security? How can the innocent visage of a typical Greek maiden contain a danger?

I suggest that Hesiod uses Pandora's bridal costume as a visual synecdoche of the feminine trap. It is precisely the conventional costume that represents feminine deceit. In other words, Hesiod employs the bride's innocent appearance as a means to expose the first woman's radical break between interiority and exteriority. Pandora's costume does not refer to her role as the future bride of Epimetheus. Rather, it serves as a metonymic sign of her dual nature, of the dichotomous structure of her soul and body. The clothed woman manifests a discrepancy between the visible and the invisible, a discrepancy that is essential to the art of seduction.

THE SEDUCTIONS OF PANDORA

How does Pandora impress herself on our literary imagination? How is she remembered? Does she strike us as a maiden radiating the beauty of innocence, or does evil dominate the image we have of her? Indeed, Zeus's remarks to Prometheus already prefigure Pandora as evil. In warning Prometheus of his plan to give humanity a *kakon*, an evil (W&D 57), Zeus makes Pandora the sign of evil even before he creates her.

At the same time, it is important to emphasize what we have already underscored in our reading of *Theogony*—namely, that evil is not the only characteristic of the first woman. Pandora is not just evil. She manifests a hybrid form called *kalon kakon* in *Theogony* (585), a "beautiful evil." In other words, feminine evil is never apparent. Its existence always remains ambiguous. In this respect, Pandora is, first of all, a duality.

Another way to say this is to note that Pandora's evil character is simultaneously a source of delight for men, *terpsis* (58). The pleasure she grants is ambiguous in the same way that Hesiod finds poetry ambiguous.²⁴ This is first and foremost announced in the description of Pandora's creation:

Ἥφαιστον δ' ἐκέλευσε περικλυτὸν ὅττι τάχιστα
 γαῖαν ὕδει φύρειν, ἐν δ' ἀνθρώπου θέμεν αὐδὴν
 καὶ σθένος, ἀθανάτης δὲ θεῆς εἰς ὧπα εἴσκειν
 παρθενικῆς καλὸν εἶδος ἐπήρατον· αὐτὰρ Αθήνην
 ἔργα διδασκῆσαι, πολυδαίδαλον ἴστον ὑφαίνειν·
 καὶ χάριν ἀμφιχέαι κεφαλῇ χρυσέην Ἀφροδίτην
 καὶ πόθον ἄργαλέον καὶ γυιοβόρους μελεδῶνας·
 ἐν δὲ θέμεν κύνεόν τε νόον καὶ ἐπὶ κλοπῶν ἦθος
 Ἑρμείην ἦνωγε, διάκτορον Ἀργεῖφόντην.
 ὥς ἔφαθ'· οἱ δ' ἐπίθοντο Διὶ Κρονίωνι ἄνακτι.
 αὐτίκα δ' ἐκ γαίης πλάσσε κλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυήεις
 παρθένῳ αἰδοίῃ ἵκελον Κρονίδεω διὰ βουλᾶς·
 ζῶσε δὲ καὶ κόσμησε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη·
 ἀμφὶ δὲ οἱ Χάριτες τε θεαὶ καὶ πότνια Πειθῶ
 ὄρμους χρυσεῖους ἔθεσαν χροῖ· ἀμφὶ δὲ τήν γε
 ὦραι καλλίκομοι στέφον ἄνθεσιν εἰαρινοῖσιν·
 πάντα δὲ οἱ χροῖ κόσμον ἐφήρμοσε Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη.
 ἐν δ' ἄρα οἱ στήθεσσι διάκτορος Ἀργεῖφόντης
 ψεύδεά θ' αἰμυλίους τε λόγους καὶ ἐπὶ κλοπῶν ἦθος
 τεύξε Διὸς βουλῇσι βαρυκτύπου· ἐν δ' ἄρα φωνὴν
 θῆκε θεῶν κῆρυξ, ὀνόμηνε δὲ τήνδε γυναῖκα
 Πανδώραν, ὅτι πάντες Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες
 δῶρον ἐδώρησαν, πῆμ' ἀνδράσιν ἀλφειστήσιν...
 ἀλλὰ γυνὴ χεῖρεσσι πίθου μέγα πῶμ' ἀφελούσα
 ἐσκέδασ' ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἐμήσατο κήδεα λυγρὰ.
 μούνη δ' αὐτόθι Ἐλπίς ἐν ἀρρήκτοις δόμοισιν
 ἔνδον ἔμιμνε πίθου ὑπὸ χεῖλεσιν, οὐδὲ θύραζε
 ἐξέπτῃ· πρόσθεν γὰρ ἐπέλλαβε πῶμα πίθοιο
 αἰγιόχου βουλῇσι Διὸς νεφεληγερέταο.
 (W&D 59–99)

[He ordered far-famed Hephaestus at once to mix earth with water, and to put into it human voice and strength, but to give her a face like an immortal goddess, the charming, lovely shape of a maiden. And he told Athena to

teach her women's work, how to weave the intricate loom. And he told Aphrodite to pour golden grace upon her head and painful desire and cares that weaken limbs. And he ordered Hermes, the Messenger, Slayer of Argos, to put into her the mind of a bitch and a treacherous nature. Thus he commanded, and they obeyed Lord Zeus, son of Kronos. At once the famed Lame One molded out of earth the likeness of a modest maiden as the son of Kronos wished, and the gray-eyed goddess Athena girded her and dressed her. Around her body the divine Graces and lady Peitho put chains of gold, and her head the fair-haired Hours wreathed with flowers of spring. And Pallas Athena fit all manner of adornment to her form. And the Messenger, Slayer of Argos, into her heart put lies and wily words and a treacherous nature according to the will of loud-thundering Zeus. And the herald of the gods gave her voice, and he named the woman Pandora, because all of the gods who live upon Olympus gave her a gift, a sorrow to men who eat bread. . . . But the woman, lifting the great lid of the jar with her hands, scattered them abroad, and wrought ruinous sorrows for men. Only hope remained within the jar, in its unbreakeable home, under the rim, and did not fly out the opening. Before that could happen the lid of the jar stopped her (by the will of aegis-bearing, cloud-gathering Zeus).—Trans. Jeffrey M. Hurwit]²⁵

Pandora is created from clay, which is a mixture of two components, water and earth (*W&D* 61). In shaping her character, the gods create a two-faced figure. On the one hand, she is given the virginal and innocent countenance of a beautiful young maiden. On the other hand, in contrast to the typical image of the taciturn, inexperienced maiden, Pandora is elaborately skilled in talking and weaving, and is equipped with all sorts of erotic gifts and seductive techniques (*W&D* 61–68). This oxymoronic woman consequently becomes the fertile source of deceptions and illusions. The principal manifestation of her ambiguity is her shape. In becoming a container of voice, thought, and desire—a vase—Pandora is made into an exteriority that conceals unknown contents.

In this respect the jar (or, in later versions, the infamous box) is truly emblematic of her figure. It not only consists of the same materials as Pandora (earth and water); it embodies the dual inside-outside structure. Furthermore, the anecdote of the jar opens yet another question: did Pandora open the jar like a thoughtless automaton, or did she open it deliberately, in a typical gesture of feminine curiosity? The jar's ambiguous hidden content is exposed: a bittersweet mixture of sorrow and hope (*W&D* 94–99).²⁶ The first woman thus comes to embody this dichotomous

structure, the interplay between exteriority and interiority. In traditional thought this duality is expressed through the binary relationship of appearance and essence.

But the gods are principally concerned with creating the first woman's appearance. They are interested in how she looks. If Pandora's impact is mainly derived from the way she looks, how can she be blamed for doing evil? How can she be considered a responsible agent if her greatest fault is a passive one? However, the gods make Pandora a responsible agent. They conceive her to be an active persona. She is not merely appearance. Her visibility is not only reflective of passivity; it has an active dimension. That is to say, Pandora's appearance is not only something that is visible, but also something that conceals. Her appearance is thus a paradox, since it at once marks and obfuscates the hidden space of inwardness.

Feminine beauty cannot, then, be understood as a mere externality. Feminine beauty always hints at something beyond itself, at the presence of something invisible. A woman's visibility implies transcendence—not a metaphysical transcendence aspiring toward an absolute, but a transcendence of appearance that points toward a dimension of the body that can never be seen. Pandora's beauty suggests the presence of a soul. Her jar-like constitution and dual nature are indicative of what we recognize to be the structure of body and soul. Since for Hesiod Pandora is the bearer *par excellence* of this duality, since she embodies the discrepancy between external appearance and hidden interiority, we may say that Hesiod's conception of the feminine serves as the grounds for understanding the human link between body and soul. As suggested, the feminine discrepancy between external appearance and invisible interiority contains a moral for the male beholder. Appearances lie: they are essentially divorced from truth; they stand in opposition to truth; and women are the incarnation of this opposition.

The significance of women's deceitful nature is not just metaphysical, however. It has clear practical and ethical implications. It turns out that for Hesiod the nature of femininity—the feminine as appearance—is what generates and regulates erotic interaction between man and woman. The field of Eros that is, the erotic game—is essentially feminine because it is based on the unnatural feminine entanglement of showing and concealing, of visible and invisible. Pandora's seductions are symptomatic of her dual constitution of body and soul, which is her feminine essence. Her image governs Hesiod's understanding of the erotic predicament of humanity. The first woman is a sign of the tragic fact that men cannot be

the masters of their erotic life. They are thrown into the erotic situation whose *modus operandi* is concealed, which remains a secret to them—a *modus operandi*, in other words, that is regulated by woman.

SOCRATES AND THEODOTE

Hesiod's image of Pandora contains a ca thesis of the erotic and the deceitful. Through the image of the first woman, *eros* becomes metaphysically and morally problematic. Yet, in the way that the image of Pandora gives rise to a new literary persona—the seducer—it concomitantly opens up the possibility of rehabilitating *eros*, of articulating the erotic as the medium of wisdom and truth. This transformation of *eros* will specifically concern us in the context of the figure of Socrates, the archetypal philosopher. Plato's Socrates is our main concern. Socrates' seductive figure is crucial for our understanding of the feminine dimension of the text because he embodies, as I will show, the heritage of the Hesiodic Pandora.

Before we turn to the Platonic image of Socrates, however, let us first consider the figure of Socrates as it appears in a particularly interesting episode in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. In the episode that concerns us, Xenophon portrays Socrates gazing at and consequently reflecting on the beauty of a well-known hetaera. This kind of situation is uncharacteristic of Socrates and clearly foreign to the ethos of the Platonic dialogue. This is not to say that beauty is irrelevant to Plato's Socrates: on the contrary, beauty and its relationship to the form of the beautiful is a major concern in a variety of Platonic dialogues. Yet whereas the Platonic Socrates frequently responds to the corporeal and metaphysical manifestations of beauty, his reflections on beauty are never inspired by the appearance of a beautiful woman.²⁷

In *Memorabilia* 3.11 the Socratic discourse on beautiful appearance grows from the dazzling sight of Theodote, a hetaera.²⁸ The passage that describes Socrates' encounter with Theodote is a mirror version of the famous Socratic encounter with another woman—the holy Diotima—as related by Plato.²⁹ Whereas in Plato's *Symposium* (201d) Socrates pays homage to the wise priestess, presenting himself as her devoted student in the art of love (*ta erotica*), in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* Socrates assumes the role of an erotic guide who teaches a woman about a love that is far from being metaphysical.³⁰ In both accounts, however, the source of Socrates' erotodidacticism is his encounter with a woman.

Theodote's episode allows us to observe Socrates in a rare moment: he gazes at a beautiful woman and analyzes the visual effect of her appearance,

attempting to decipher its enigmatic erotic force. As he overcomes his initial wonder, Socrates' reflections on the nature of Theodote's beauty enable us to consider the transfiguration of Hesiod's Pandora into the philosophical, Socratic context. The first detail we notice is that Theodote emulates Pandora not only in her exquisite beauty, but in her name as well. Like Pandora, Theodote is "a divine gift."

In his *Memorabilia* Xenophon relates a series of Socratic conversations concerning the arts. Among them is the art of love. After visiting the ateliers of a painter, a sculptor, and a maker of armor, Socrates pays a visit—not typically noticed as connected with the other three calls—to the home of the famous hetaera Theodote.³¹ How does her art relate to that of Parhasius, Cleiton, and Pistias, the painter, sculptor, and armor-maker, respectively? What makes it possible to include Theodote's erotic profession in the mimetic arts? Is the evocation of Theodote's occupation meant only to provide a contrast with the sister arts?

One way to understand the relationship between these four artists would be to compare the way each depicts the human body. In considering the painter, sculptor, armor-maker, and hetaera, there is a gradual decrease in the degree of separation between the artistic medium and the body. Whereas the painter creates two-dimensional representations of the human body—that is, representations based on a visual illusionism that compensates for the remoteness of his work from any actual body—the sculptor takes pride in creating three-dimensional figures that, although distinct from what they represent, occupy a similar position in space. The maker of armor must address the actual needs of an identifiable body, while, finally, the hetaera's art makes use of her own body as the ultimate source of pleasure. In evaluating these four arts through the criterion of distance from the corporeal, painting would seem to be the highest and most intellectual form, while the work of the hetaera appears to be at the bottom of the ladder. And yet, despite its apparent inferiority, Theodote receives Socrates' (or Xenophon's) greatest attention. She is the only one of the four artists with whom Socrates develops a dialogue of considerable length. Does Socrates value Theodote's art more than the mimetic arts? Before examining her professional consciousness, Socrates discusses her appearance, which is fundamental to her professional success.

Theodote's beauty attracts many admirers. Their reaction to her recalls the paradigmatic response to Pandora. In repeating the role assumed by the original seductive woman, Theodote also makes appearance her emblem. She is lavishly adorned (*polutelos kekosmemenen*, 3.11.4)³² and is

fully aware of her beauty as a matter of presentation. The central role of appearance for Th eodote and her observers is described at the beginning of the episode:

Γυναικὸς δέ ποτε οὔσης ἐν τῇ πόλει καλῆς, ἥ ὄνομα ἦν Θεοδότη, καὶ οἷας συνεῖναι τῷ πείθοντι, μνησθέντος αὐτῆς τῶν παρόντων τινὸς καὶ εἰπόντος ὅτι κρεῖττον εἶη λόγου τὸ κάλλος τῆς γυναικός, καὶ ζωγράφους φήσαντος εἰσιέναι πρὸς αὐτὴν ἀπαικασομένους, οἷς ἐκείνην ἐπιδεικνύειν ἑαυτῆς ὅσα καλῶς ἔχοι, Ἰτέον ἂν εἶη θεασομένους, ἔφη ὁ Σωκράτης· οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἀκούσασί γε τὸ λόγου κρεῖττον ἔστι καταμαθεῖν. καὶ ὁ διηγησάμενος, οὐκ ἂν φθάνοιτ', ἔφη, ἀκολουθοῦντες. οὕτως μὲν δὴ πορευθέντες πρὸς τὴν Θεοδότην καὶ καταλαβόντες ζωγράφῳ τινὶ παρεστηκυῖαν ἐθεάσαντο. παυσάμενου δὲ τοῦ ζωγράφου, ὦ ἄνδρες, ἔφη ὁ Σωκράτης, πότερον ἡμᾶς δεῖ μᾶλλον Θεοδότῃ χάριν ἔχειν, ὅτι ἡμῖν τὸ κάλλος ἑαυτῆς ἐπέδειξεν, ἢ ταύτῃ ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐθεασάμεθα; ἄρ' εἰ μὲν ταύτῃ ὠφελιμωτέρα ἐστὶν ἢ ἐπίδειξις, ταύτῃ ἡμῖν χάριν ἐκτέον, εἰ δὲ ἡμῖν ἢ θέα, ἡμᾶς ταύτῃ; εἰπόντος δὲ τινος ὅτι δίκαια λέγοι, Οὐκοῦν, ἔφη, αὕτη μὲν ἦδη τε παρ' ἡμῶν ἔπαινον κερδαίνει καί, ἐπειδὴν εἰς πλείους διαγγείλωμεν, πλείω ὠφελήσεται· ἡμεῖς δὲ ἦδη τε ὧν ἐθεασάμεθα ἐπιθυμοῦμεν ἄψασθαι καὶ ἄπιμεν ὑποκνιζόμενοι καὶ ἀπελθόντες ποθήσομεν. ἐκ δὲ τούτων εἰκὸς ἡμᾶς μὲν θεραπεύειν, ταύτῃν δὲ θεραπεύεσθαι. καὶ ἡ Θεοδότῃ, Νὴ Δί', ἔφη, εἰ τοίνυν ταῦθ' οὕτως ἔχει, ἐμὲ ἂν δέοι ὑμῖν τῆς θεᾶς χάριν ἔχειν.

(*Mem.* 3.11.1–3)

[There was a beautiful (*kale*) woman in the city, whose name was Th eodote, and who was the sort to keep company with whoever persuaded her. When one of those who were present mentioned her and said that the beauty of the woman surpassed speech; and when he had said that painters, to whom she displayed as much of herself as was noble to display, visited her in order to draw her likeness, Socrates said, "We must go to behold her, for surely it is not possible for those who have merely heard to learn what surpasses speech." And the one who had described her said, "Hurry up and follow." Thus they went to Th eodote and came upon her standing for a certain painter, and they beheld her. After the painter left off, Socrates said, "Men, should we be more grateful to Th eodote for displaying for us her beauty, or she to us because we beheld? If the display is more beneficial to her, as is it for her to be grateful to us, while if the beholding is more beneficial to us, for us to be grateful to her?" And when someone said that

what he said was just, he said, "She, then, already gains from our praise and will be the more benefited whenever we should report it to more people; while we already desire to touch what we have beheld and will go away rather excited and will long for what we have left behind. From these things it is plausible that it is we who serve and she who receives service." And Theodote said, "By Zeus, if this is so, then it is I who should be grateful to you for the beholding."—Trans. Amy L. Bonnette]³³

Socrates' encounter with Theodote revolves around her striking appearance. This provokes reflections on the kinds of gaze to which Theodote is subjected. She is an object of at least three: the gaze of lovers, the gaze of artists, and now, with Socrates' arrival, the gaze of the philosopher. Theodote is not simply captured in men's eyes; she is also an object of imitation. While artists strive to capture her beautiful appearance in their respective visual forms of representation, the layman too struggles (even if vainly) to do the same thing with words. Socrates explains the desire to imitate the beauty of Theodote as an erotic response. Her beauty affects those who look upon her, inciting a desire to touch what is seen. For Socrates this desire remains unfulfilled and so becomes a longing. Longing is precisely what causes those who have seen Theodote to return to her again and again. Longing is what makes her viewers regular customers, or, to use Theodote's own language, friends, *philoî* (*Mem.* 3.11.4). Her appearance is physical, corporeal. And yet, paradoxically, her presence is fundamentally unattainable. Her beauty, though physical, cannot be captured by the hand that touches it. It cannot be held or possessed by others. It remains a source of longing, the source of the artistic drive to represent and capture the uncapturable.

This invisible dimension of Theodote's appearance links her art to the other three artistic forms that interest Socrates. They are of interest because of their ability to represent the invisible. Socrates inquires into the painter's art of imitating the character (*ethos*) of the soul in paint. He is interested in the sculptor's mode of representing emotions (*pathos*), and in the armor-maker's ability to create breastplates that imitate the body's *eurythmia*. Socrates is curious about these dimensions of the artists' work because, for him, the criterion for judging the visual quality of a work of art is the artist's ability to transcend the visual.

In the case of the painter and sculptor, it is definitely a question of becoming aware of the role of the soul in endowing the body with meaning. Thus, Socrates gets Parrhasius to admit that his painted figures reflect

the invisible qualities of the *psyche* (*Mem.* 3.10.3), and he leads Cleiton to see that his art of representation must face up to the activities of the soul (3.10.8). According to Socrates, a good imitation succeeds in endowing an appearance with its own principle of life. This principle is applicable to the art of armor, which, in Socrates' view, rests on a representation of the body's internal harmony and unity. Socrates teaches the three artists to develop their capacity for observation and their ability to read invisible meaning into what they see and, correspondingly, to create appearances that embody hidden qualities.

Theodote's artistic status is exceptional because her art is not representational. She does not create representations as much as she enacts forms of self-representation. Theodote presents herself as a work of art. Her art is not mimetic, at least not in the ordinary sense. It does not refer to anything but itself. Her art is one of self-patterning, shaping the self into the form of a perfected object of desire.³⁴ In order to effect this, Theodote not only has to be competent; she must possess true expertise in what Socrates understands to be the dialectics of body and soul. This is also what makes her art, in his view, the highest of the aforementioned art forms. Theodote, however, seems to be unaware of her privileged position as an artist, and it is only through a Socratic dialogue (in its Xenophonic form) that she gains access to the possibility of self-knowledge.

Xenophon's Socrates reveals to Theodote a reflective path that allows her to come to terms with and assume responsibility for her professional life. Two main themes recur in the questions Socrates poses to Theodote: the place and significance of the gaze, and the dialectics of the gaze, in which she is always involved. "Should we be more grateful to Theodote for displaying for us her beauty, or she to us because we beheld?" Theodote cannot escape her role as an object of desire, an object of sight, but Socrates is nevertheless insistent on leading her to a new understanding of herself. By means of his questioning, he draws her attention to the fact that her appearance is not something given in itself as much as it is something always dependent on the gaze of a viewer. That is to say, Theodote has an appearance, first and foremost, because she is part of a world of gazes, entangled in the human dynamics of looking and being looked at.³⁵ This understanding has a liberating effect, according to Socrates. Theodote should not understand herself as an object to be desired or ignored by others, but as an active agent in a complicated human interaction with those who see and are attracted by what they see. At the same time, those who see are always themselves being seen. This constitutes the second part

of the Socratic conversation with Theodote, which is concerned with the place and significance of skill and contrivance in her professional life:

ὅ τι ἂν λέγουσα εὐφραίνοις, καὶ ὅτι δεῖ τὸν μὲν ἐπιμελόμενον ἀσμένως ὑποδέχεσθαι, τὸν δὲ τρυφῶντα ἀποκλείειν, καὶ ἄρρωστήσαντός γε φίλου φροντιστικῶς ἐπισκέψασθαι καὶ καλὸν τι πράξαντος σφόδρα συνησθῆναι καὶ τῷ σφόδρα σοῦ φροντίζοντι ὅλη τῇ ψυχῇ κεχαρίσθαι· φιλεῖν γε μὴν εὖ οἶδ' ὅτι ἐπίστασαι οὐ μόνον μαλακῶς, ἀλλὰ καὶ εὐνοικῶς·

(*Mem.* 3.11.10)

[You learn both how you might gratify with a look and delight with what you say; and that you must receive with gladness one who is attentive but shut out one who is spoiled; and that when a friend is sick, at least, to watch over him worriedly, and when he does something noble to be exceedingly pleased by it along with him; and to gratify with your whole soul the one who worries about you exceedingly.]

The term “contrivance” (*mechane*) is opposed to luck (*tuche*), which, in the erotic field, is tied to the domain of instincts and impulsiveness—the unpredictable and uncontrollable power of *eros*. In the context of the theatrical stage, *mechane* refers to the technological ability to produce the effect of a sudden godly appearance. In an analogous manner, *mechane* is what enables the hetaira to simulate the effects of passion. At the same time, the art of love becomes an art only through the artist’s skill in concealing the existence of the *mechane* behind a curtain of appearances.³⁶

In celebrating the importance of *mechane* for Theodote’s art, Socrates reproduces his own version of Pandora’s dual *dolos*: feminine existence is deceitful in having an external appearance that does not match its hidden interior; and it is again deceitful in hiding the difference between interiority and external appearance. Whereas the *dolos* of Pandora is manifest in the manner in which her beauty freezes the viewer’s gaze, allowing appearance to dominate essence, Socrates’ philosophical gaze liberates the structure of the feminine *trompe l’oeil* from its Hesiodic stigma. For Socrates, Theodote’s external appearance is based on a *mechane* she must learn to master. Her beauty is based on a form of self-knowledge. In guiding Theodote toward a self-understanding that would allow her to be in control of her appearance, Socrates must make use of the essential distinction between body and soul: “And in it [your body is] a soul through which

you learn both how you might gratify with a look and delight with what you say” (*Mem.* 3.11.10). The soul is the motivating force of the hetaera’s conduct, gestures, and appearance. Only by recognizing the invisible dimension of her being can she excel in and profit from the art of love.

Socrates’ deep understanding of the hetaera’s erotic art is not coincidental but is tied to the nature of his philosophical practice:

ἐν δὲ τούτῳ ψυχὴν, ἣ καταμανθάνεις καὶ ὡς ἂν ἐμβλέπουσα χαρίζοιο
καὶ ὅτι ἂν λέγουσα εὐφραίνοις.

(*Mem.* 3.11.16)

[And I also have female friends who will not allow me to leave them day or night, since they are learning love charms and incantations from me.]

Socrates’ irony should not conceal the fact that in the above passage he proclaims both his authority in the field of *eros* and his own seductive presence. As Theodote well understands, the source of Socrates’ erotic knowledge is philosophy. The Socratic philosophical practice is thus linked by Xenophon to the art of love and more particularly to the art of the hetaera. With this connection in mind, we may turn now from Xenophon’s anecdotal Socrates to the figure who appears in the Platonic dialogues.

At the center of our concern is the connection between seduction and textuality in Plato. Socrates’ seductive side is very clear in Plato’s dialogues, and the presence of an intimate connection between Socrates’ erotic character and the nature of philosophy is also a recurrent theme in readings of Plato. What I wish to focus on is the relationship between the seductiveness of Plato’s Socrates—Socrates’ *eros*—and Plato’s understanding of the workings of his own text. Examining the striking affinity between the figure of Socrates and the archetypal first woman, Pandora. I place particular emphasis on the way in which Plato reinterprets the Hesiodic image of the feminine in its relation to *eros*.

SOCRATES AND PANDORA

In one of the first appearances of the Platonic Socrates, in *Apology* 31b, Socrates asks his judges and audience to recall what his presence means for the Athenian city, and to consider whether he is “really the sort of person who would have been sent to this city as a gift from God” (*dedostai*).³⁷ Socrates’ wish is to be remembered as a divine gift to a city that has declined and forgotten its noble origins. But what an odd gift he is, this

annoying gadfly who harasses a large and noble horse (30e). This image of Socrates as gadfly makes him into an attachment (*proskeimenon*, 30e) inflicted upon the self-indulgent city. Though Plato was careful not to employ the word *doron* for “gift” in this context, his formulation in 30d7, *ten tou theou dosin*, “god’s gift,” nevertheless recalls the epithet of Pandora in *Works and Days* 85, *doron theon*, “the gift of the gods.”³⁸ Both texts, Hesiod’s *Works and Days* and Plato’s *Apology*, celebrate the censure of their protagonists by society, as well as the collective refusal to recognize the value of the gift these protagonists bring. Nevertheless, the images of Pandora and Socrates are not compatible. The crux of the Hesiodic image of Pandora is the ambiguous nature of her gift. For Plato, condemnation of Socrates is indicative of society’s shortcomings. In other words, he presents Socrates as a gift that is misunderstood and misused. That hostile, negative reception is not unconnected to an ambiguity in Socrates’ character and behavior. His alleged care for his interlocutors’ souls often causes them embarrassment. His goodness, that is, assumes the form of an annoyance. His wisdom takes the form of professed ignorance. The city was alarmed by this restless nuisance and could hardly find any good in his provocations. Socrates, according to Plato, is a gift whose utility remained concealed from the majority of Athenians because they could not understand that his annoying behavior was the essence of his usefulness.

Socrates’ duality is given its fullest elaboration in the *Symposium*, where the philosopher is portrayed as a seducer and a teacher of love. In searching for the literary sources of this new literary persona, we should make note of a striking connection between the figure of Socrates and Hesiod’s Pandora. Pandora might at first seem to offer only a negative model for the construction of the Socratic figure. Whereas she is known as the *kalon kakon*, the one whose exterior is beautiful and whose interior is evil, he is characterized by an unsightly exteriority and a beautiful inward goodness. She exemplifies the deceptiveness of appearance, while he represents the hidden nature of truth.

And yet an affinity between the philosopher and the first woman exists, in spite of these apparent differences. To begin with, it should be noted that their external appearances affect their viewers in the same manner: both the beautiful woman and the ugly philosopher strike others with wonder.³⁹ In the *Symposium* this effect is apparent when Alcibiades turns to look at Socrates. As Alcibiades enters Agathon’s house, he is unaware of Socrates’ presence. He is drunk and wears a beautiful wreath made of fresh flowers and ribbons, with which, he announces, he will crown the

cleverest and best-looking man (212e). He naturally turns to the handsome Agathon, the acclaimed winner of the festival. But then he suddenly notices Socrates and cries out:

᾽ὦ Ἡράκλεις, τουτὶ τί ἦν; Σωκράτης οὗτος; ἔλλοχῶν αὖ με ἐνταῦθα κατέκεισο ὥσπερ εἰώθεις ἐξαίφνης ἀναφαίνεσθαι ὅπου ἐγὼ ὥμην ἥκιστά σε ἔσεσθαι.
(*Symp.* 213c)

[Good lord, what's going on here? It's Socrates! You've trapped me (*katekeiso*) again! You always do this to me—all of a sudden you'll turn up out of nowhere where I least expect you!—Trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff]⁴⁰

Caught by surprise, Alcibiades once again experiences the erotic effect of the Socratic presence and accuses the latter of playing his old hunting game.⁴¹ How strange it must be to experience the same surprise, time after time, and at the hands of the same old acquaintance. And yet Alcibiades is shocked to see Socrates—so much so that he strips Agathon's head of the ribbons he has bestowed on him and places them instead on Socrates, declaring his to be the most wonderful of heads, *thaumaste kephale* (213e).⁴² In so doing, he not only dethrones Agathon by pronouncing Socrates the cleverest man on earth, but unexpectedly calls the latter the most beautiful of men, *kallistos*, as well (212e).

Alcibiades' response to the sight of Socrates is surprising in many ways. First, it is directed toward his physical and corporeal presence. What's more, Alcibiades considers the philosopher's physical appearance to be beautiful, and he assigns him a strong erotic appeal.

SOCRATES' BODY

Since we are not accustomed to think of Socrates' physical appearance in positive terms, Alcibiades surprises us. He declares what sensitive readers of Plato's *Symposium* may have already sensed—Socrates has a body, and that body is the source of charisma.⁴³ This is not the conventional view of Socrates. Nor is it the way Socrates seems to conceive of himself. As Martha C. Nussbaum writes:

Socrates has so dissociated himself from his body that he genuinely does not feel its pain, or regard its sufferings as things genuinely happening to

him. He is famous for drinking without ever getting drunk, and without the hangovers complained of by the others. . . . He really seems to think of himself as a being whose mind is distinct from his body, whose personality in no way identifies itself with the body and the body's adventures.⁴⁴

Socrates' indifference toward his body is usually interpreted as a function of his view of the relationship between body and soul.⁴⁵ Socrates regards the soul as superior to the body. According to *Phaedo* and *Gorgias*, the soul and the body are detached from each other, the visible, corporeal, and mortal being irrevocably separated from the invisible, metaphysical, and immortal. Life forces these two opposing domains together, but the union between body and soul turns each into a prisoner, or a tenant, of the other. The Socratic metaphors of the body as a tomb (*Grg.* 493a) and a prison of the soul (*Phd.* 82e) express the philosopher's desire to be redeemed from the constraints of the body.⁴⁶

Despite the forcefulness of these metaphors, the Platonic Socrates does not express uncompromising contempt for the body and its visual attractions.⁴⁷ We should note that Plato never simply ignores the bodily presence of Socrates. His body is a question for Plato, one that arises in the description of Socrates' idiosyncratic physiognomy, and in his erotic, often corporeal, responses to the beauty of others.⁴⁸ The question "Who is Socrates?" has, according to Nicole Loraux, a twofold answer: while for Socrates it is clearly his soul, for others Socrates is inseparable from his physicality.⁴⁹ But what is the source of Socrates' physical appeal?

SOCRATES' BEAUTY

Let us take Alcibiades' response at face value. Can we seriously accept his reference to Socrates as the most beautiful of men? This is not easy, especially when we recall that this "most beautiful" man is also referred to as an ugly and grotesque Silenus or satyr by Alcibiades himself (*Symp.* 215b, 221d). How is it possible that the stupefying effect of Socrates' repulsive appearance is so similar to the stunning effect of the beauty of Pandora or Theodote? Ugliness remains exactly that, even if it belongs to a brilliant mind. Plato supplies a good example in the figure of Theaetetus, bright, young, but ugly. His teacher, Theodorus, introduces him to Socrates:⁵⁰

καὶ μὴν, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐμοί τε εἰπεῖν καὶ σοὶ ἀκούσαι πάντοτε ἄξιον οἶμαι
 ὑμῖν τῶν πολιτῶν μειρακίῳ ἐντετύχηκα. καὶ εἰ μὲν ἦν καλός, ἐφοβούμην
 ἂν σφόδρα λέγειν, μὴ καὶ τῷ δόξῃ ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ αὐτοῦ εἶναι. νῦν δέ — καὶ

μή μοι ἄχθου— οὐκ ἔστι καλός, προσέοικε δὲ σοὶ τήν τε σιμότητα καὶ τὸ ἔξω τῶν ὀμμάτων· ἦττον δὲ ἢ σὺ ταῦτ' ἔχει. ἀδεῶς δὲ λέγω. εὖ γάρ ἴσθι ὅτι ὧν δὴ πώποτε ἐνέτυχον —καὶ πάνυ πολλοῖς πεπλησίακα — οὐδένα πω ἠσθόμην οὕτω θαυμαστώως εὖ πεφυκότα. τὸ γὰρ εὖμαθῆ ὄντα ὥς ἄλλω χαλεπὸν πρᾶον αὐ εἶναι διαφερόντως, καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις ἀνδρεῖον παρ' ὄντινούν, ἐγὼ μὲν οὕτ' ἂν ὠρόμην γενέσθαι οὔτε ὁρῶ γιγνόμενον·

(*Tht.* 143e–44a)

[Yes, Socrates, I have met with a youth of this city who certainly deserves mention, and you will find it worthwhile to hear me describe him. If he were handsome, I should be afraid to use strong terms, lest I should be suspected of being in love with him. However, he is not handsome, but—forgive my saying so—he resembles you in being snub-nosed and having prominent eyes, though these features are less marked in him. So I can speak without fear. I assure you that, among all the young men I have met with—and I have had to do with a good many—I have never found such admirable gifts. The combination of a rare quickness of intelligence with exceptional gentleness and of an incomparably virile spirit with both, is a thing that I should hardly have believed could exist.—Trans. Francis Macdonald]⁵¹

Theaetetus is physically unattractive. Nevertheless, he makes a positive impression on his beholder through his conspicuous intelligence and intellectual gifts. Theodorus, his patron, introduces him with great enthusiasm. Theodorus is aware that his passionate presentation of the young Theaetetus might suggest an inflamed interest on the part of an older man. And yet Theodorus is not really troubled: he will not be suspected of being physically attracted to the boy because Theaetetus is so ugly—as ugly as Socrates (*Tht.* 209c; *Statesman* 257d). Nevertheless, despite the striking similarity, Theaetetus is not Socrates, but just a faint copy. How can Socrates' ugliness be considered beautiful? What makes his unappealing appearance so alluring? What is the secret of his erotic charm?

SOCRATES' EROS

It is widely recognized that the figures of Socrates and Eros are symbolically tied together in the *Symposium*. Socrates is prefigured in Diotima's mythic portrayal of Eros as a *daimon*—an image that is strengthened by Alcibiades' autobiographical account, which portrays Socrates as a symbolic descendant of Eros himself. Alcibiades not only adopts the term

daimonion in addressing Socrates (202d–3d)⁵² but also depicts Socrates' physiognomy, personality, and philosophical disposition in a manner that recalls crucial aspects of the figure of Eros. Like Eros, Socrates is barefoot and is a lover of wisdom and beauty. Moreover, as a human embodiment of Eros, Socrates' vocation as a teacher of love is realized in his (erotic) role as mediator between the human and the divine, the ephemeral and the eternal.

In presenting Socrates as its human embodiment, Plato adopted and reinterpreted the Hesiodic genealogy of Eros. As we recall in *Theogony* the primordial cosmological stage is ushered in by an abstract presence of the erotic force. Only with the maturation of the sensible world does Eros acquire its concrete, sensual manifestations. This first occurs in Aphrodite's beautiful countenance. Finally, Eros is embodied in the image of Pandora—that is, in the appearance of the phenomenon *par excellence* (see chapter 1). Both *Theogony* and the *Symposium* conceive of their protagonists as direct descendants of Eros. Pandora and Socrates are two human manifestations of the divine, or the daimonic, Eros.

In order to appreciate Socrates' erotic dimension, one should again look at him through the eyes of Alcibiades. Alcibiades' gaze turns Socrates into a Pandora. As he beholds Socrates, he undergoes a visual experience similar to that of men who have gazed at Pandora: he faces a visibility that contains an invisible dimension, a figure that hides an interiority:

φημὶ γὰρ δὴ ὁμοιότατον αὐτὸν εἶναι τοῖς σιληνοῖς τούτοις τοῖς ἐν τοῖς ἔρμογλυφεῖοις καθημένοις, οὓστινας ἐργάζονται οἱ δημιουργοὶ σύριγγας ἢ αὐλοὺς ἔχοντας, οἳ διχάδε διοιχθέντες φαίνονται ἔνδοθεν ἀγάλματα ἔχοντες θεῶν. καὶ φημὶ αὐτὸ εἰκέναι αὐτὸν τῷ σατύρῳ τῷ Μαρσῳ.

(*Symp.* 215b)

[Look at him! Isn't he just like a statue of Silenus? You know the kind of statue I mean; you'll find them in any shop in town. It's a Silenus sitting, his flute or his pipes in his hands, and it's hollow. It's split down the middle, and inside it's full of tiny statues of the gods. Now look at him again! Isn't he also just like the satyr Marsyas?]

As human embodiments of Eros, Pandora and Socrates share a similar structure: their selfhood rests on the tension between exteriority and interiority, between appearance and being. Pandora and Socrates share a

deceitful appearance; their seduction is based on a discrepancy between the visible and the invisible. While Pandora traditionally exemplifies the deceptiveness of appearance, Socrates represents the hiddenness of truth. Yet the figures share a common inner form. Their essential binding finds its expression in the fact that Socrates is Pandora's mirror image. Both figures know how to direct the desire of their beholders toward the hidden presence of their enigmatic inwardness. Hence, if beauty is the touch of transcendence in the phenomenal, if it is a visibility that carries within itself a promise of the invisible, then we may say that Pandora and Socrates are both, in their own ways, beautiful.

The hidden interiority of Pandora and Socrates directs their beholders to transcend their appearance in order to unveil the truth. This interiority is construed in both cases as a regulative idea and not as an attainable content. Socrates and Pandora privilege the very quest for meaning over and against any actual grasp of a determinate content. In this respect, Plato liberates the Hesiodic image of Pandora from its evil stigma. Plato's ingenuity, in this context, lies in his ability to sublimate the anxiety associated with the Hesiodic image of hiddenness and to turn this image into a sign of passionate thought.

Plato's assumption of the legacy of Pandora, however, extends beyond the creation of the Socratic persona. For Plato, her image, with her irresolvable duality, becomes the sign of textuality as such. In the *Symposium* the Hesiodic image of Pandora acquires its fullest textual significance. It is not only Socrates' physical appearance that refers beyond itself, but Socrates' *logoi* as well (222a).⁵³ His utterances, like his appearance, operate through the tension between concealment and disclosure. In order to understand his *logoi* one needs, as Alcibiades informs us, "to go behind the surface" of the text. This, of course, hints at Plato's understanding of the character of his own writing. A text, according to Plato, is an entity that hides a dimension of depth that the text's surface can never measure. A text is a phenomenon whose visibility always carries a residue of invisibility, calling the reader to engage in the endless task of interpretation, in the eternal pursuit of meaning.

Pandora's Voice and the Emergence of Ovid's Poetic Persona

PANDORA'S VOICE

Hesiod's version of the myth of the first woman locates the origin of language in Zeus's deceitful gift to men. Pandora, the archetypal woman, is known for her gift of seduction and her ability to manipulate her beholders. She is the first human being to be characterized by language. She is, in fact, a master of rhetoric whose divine patron is the god Hermes himself (*W&D* 59–82). And yet, in spite of this mythical association of the feminine with rhetorical dexterity, ideal conceptions of woman prefer to envision her as silent. Traditional authors encourage women to keep quiet and listen, to learn but never to teach.¹ This subordination is reasserted in Paul's famous denial of authority to women: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim. 2:11–13).

Pandora's speech provokes anxiety. Men fear her unreliable language. They are afraid of being swept up in the seductive power of her words. But Pandora's linguistic talent does not just provoke male anxiety; it is also a characteristic of feminine promiscuity. This means that Pandora constitutes an antithesis to the "good" female, the restrained woman. Symbolically, Pandora is not merely a gifted speaker. Her language is a manifestation of the invincible force of *eros*. Never transparent or disciplined, Pandora's language is the language of multiplicity, always at play with concealments and dissimulations. Following Pandora, a woman's language always bears the potential of becoming the language of the *femme fatale*. Woman is dangerous precisely because she is a master of speech, a rhetorician, a weaver of words that expose her immoderate and lustful

interiority. Feminine seductive speech is considered dangerous because it conveys power and manipulation, which are unwanted traits of the "second sex." This impending threat implies illegitimacy: the woman is inevitably an illegitimate speaker. In this respect, Pandora's nature can be found in any woman who in speaking transgresses the boundaries of her gender.

This chapter focuses on the manner in which the feminine position in language is internalized by the literary text. The previous chapter deals with the seductive dimension of Socrates' figure, emphasizing seduction as a principle of Plato's textuality. In the present chapter, I wish to explore the symbolic meaning assigned to Pandora as an illegitimate speaker. Shifting from the figure of the philosophical teacher of love to the poetic one, I shall examine the subversive character of feminine speech in the context of Roman love elegy. Ovid's erotodidactic writing will be at the center of my discussion. Not only is Ovid known for his fascination with the feminine experience, voice, and persona, but, as I will show, it is Ovid, more than any other ancient author, who internalizes Pandora's position as a speaker, elaborating that position as the mark of his own form of textuality.

This is the first of two chapters dedicated to Ovid. While the next chapter deals with the structure of his erotodidactic works, the present discussion considers the shaping of the Ovidian persona as a love teacher. This will be done by deciphering the generic significance of a family of terms—*Musa proterva*, *levitas*, and *lascivia*—whose derogatory connotations are rooted in the ancient construction of the feminine. Promiscuity, lightness, insincerity, and licentiousness are all feminine tropes. We need to understand the erotic force of the feminine voice in the context of the various ways in which it is heard: a voice that speaks against the cultural norms that determine the propriety of what a woman says, thinks, or desires. Pointing to the role of the feminine voice in shaping the narratological complexity of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Patricia Szlezman-Mitchell argues that "the female voice itself is felt as something both transgressive and inadequate. A woman's speech in itself, regardless of what she says, is often a claim to have a voice, a struggle for power."² I am concerned here with the way in which the thematization of the feminine voice becomes intrinsic to Ovid's own poetics. I shall argue that Ovid is a poet who internalizes these apparently problematic aspects of feminine speech in order to create a new poetic effect. More specifically, he explicitly uses a terminology that is derived from the feminine in order to mark the illegitimate effect of his erotodidactic works.

Before we turn to Ovid, however, it may be fruitful to elaborate first the conditions under which women's language appears to be subversive. What is the paradigm in which a woman's speech calls attention to itself as that which requires restraint, limitations, external (masculine) control, and censorship? What is the authority of a woman's speech that breaks the unwritten code of silence? In what sense can feminine silence and outspokenness be understood as literary phenomena? Three literary episodes will help me draw the connection between the assertive feminine speaker and the emergence of the subversive text.

CLYTEMNESTRA'S KRATOS

Public appearances of the *vox feminina* belong to the Greek stage. Being produced by male actors, of course, they are not authentic expressions of feminine voices. How, then, is the feminine voice constructed?³ The dramatic significance of the feminine persona lies in the way it subverts and breaks ancient conventions of femininity in the Greek theater. Consider, for example, such exceptional heroines as Clytemnestra, Antigone, Medea, and Phaedra. These figures occupy a central space on stage, they dominate the dramatic time, and they constantly draw attention toward their eccentric, unconventional and decisive actions. And yet almost every single aspect of their performance is testimony to the subversive meaning of their dramatic role. More specifically, the very appearance of feminine figures on stage violates the most fundamental conventions of Athenian society. These dramatic images of women are powerful, assertive, aggressive, and, moreover, active. They stand on stage, and in so doing they symbolically transgress the unwritten law that prescribes their Greek way of life. Here, on stage, the representation of women is not confined to the private domain of the home. Women are not hidden from the public eye as they are in normal Greek life. And so the feminine protagonist's usurpation of the stage is important in appreciating the gendered significance of her theatrical transgression. Even without acknowledging their violent passions, it is enough that these feminine figures are visible, that they speak and act in public, to turn them into powerful, authoritative women. These representations of women who aspire to power and authority, to *kratos*, are unconventional and provocative.⁴

Aeschylus's Clytemnestra offers a paradigmatic case of such feminine power, since she literally rules as queen of Argos in Agamemnon's absence. In other words, she is a legitimate ruler in an abnormal time and situation. Nevertheless, in spite of the legitimacy of her rule,⁵ Clytemnestra's

regency is attacked more than once as violating every social code of behavior. The image of this authoritative woman clearly represents a dangerous phenomenon, a danger born of the unwanted hybridization of ideal images of masculinity and femininity, of activity and passivity, of the public and the private spheres. The anxiety caused by the authoritative female is early on announced by the Watchman, who describes Clytemnestra at the very beginning of the trilogy: "This is show the manly minded [*androboulon*] heart of a woman exercises power [*kratei*] while expecting [the signal of Agamemnon's return]" (Ag. 10–11). Typically for a woman, Clytemnestra is—as Denniston and Page comment on "expecting" (*elpizon*)—"full of guilt, fear (because of her dealing with Aegisthus) and eagerness (to avenge the death of Iphigenia)."⁶ These strong passions and intrigues are not at all alien to the feminine archetype. Yet in contrast to the typical, or even the ideal, image of woman, Clytemnestra is doubly dangerous precisely because her masculine position allows her to realize secret (internal and hence feminine) intentions. Aeschylus's treatment of her speech is crucial for understanding the political significance of her abnormal authority. In other words, the ancient theater inverted the sociopolitical conventions, giving dramatic expression to an instance of rhetorical barbarism: women speaking publicly. While in standard language the term "feminine authority" is simply an empty expression, it comes to life, albeit as a phantasm, on the ancient stage.

Clytemnestra's transgression opens our discussion of the feminine voice to the literary aspect of her *kratos*, one that gives birth to the unconventional expressions *feminina auctor* ("female author") and *feminina auctoritas* ("female authority"), and to its significance in patriarchal societies.⁷ What is the literary significance of a woman's *kratos*? How does ancient poetry imagine a woman's literary position, concerns, and taste?

SILENCING PENELOPE

The first instance in which *kratos* is associated with the concept of literary authority—the first time it appears at the intersection of power, art, and gender—is in Homer's *Odyssey*. True, the episode (*Od.* 1.325–59) constitutes a reenactment of the social order. It reorganizes male and female roles in their proper categories, and culminates in silencing the female by enforcing male expectations. Nevertheless, this passage is the *locus classicus* that gives rise to feminine literary demands. The episode recounts the conflict between Telemachos and Penelope over authority in literary

matters. The question regarding the right to make a decision about household affairs (*kratos*, *Od.* 1.359) arises in the context of a literary dispute concerning the performance of the house bard, Phemius. More specifically, Telemachos and Penelope challenge each other's authority to determine the content of the bard's song. In the confrontation they express their diverging views about poetry's aim, sources, and values. This conflict between a young man and a woman, between a son and his mother, is connected to their respective positions as listeners, interpreters, and literary patrons. These literary positions are organized into male-female sets of oppositions. Telemachos makes it clear to his mother that she belongs to the rear parts of the house, where she is expected to engage in her traditional feminine occupation, weaving. *Mythos*, which here specifies the field of poetry, remains a masculine activity performed and administered by men. Moreover, in this particular case responsibility for the bard's performance belongs entirely to Telemachos. It should be noted, however, that Telemachos's claim to an authorial position on poetic matters derives from his *kratos*—his claim to authority over household affairs.

Before Penelope disappears to her rooms, before she surrenders to silence, she raises her voice and expresses her desires. The fact that her son is deaf to his mother's demands only intensifies her feminine presence, a presence that is manifest despite her absence from the house's public hall. Penelope illustrates the ambiguous status of the feminine voice. On the one hand, her voice is autonomous and clear. On the other hand, it is also illicit.⁸

PANDORA'S COMIC VOICE

Comedy gives voice to socially low figures. In particular, Plautine comedy grants freedom of speech to slaves.⁹ The scheming slave regulates the development of the plot and dominates the dramatic situation through his mastery of language. By means of metaphors, wit, and rhetorical invention, the slave creates illusionary situations. He has the capacity to lie and fabricate situations as real. The slave's comic effect lies in the way he breaks the silence that is typically imposed on him. The slave speaks up: his language is provocative, his voice is illegitimate and hence the effect of his presence is fundamentally funny. As such, the slave is an example of metatheater: more than any other comic character, this socially low figure represents the playwright himself. But more importantly, it is the slave's subversive form of speech act that mirrors the essence of Plautine comedy.¹⁰

In *Miles Gloriosus*, Plautus elaborates comedy's attraction to subversive language. In addition to the language of the scheming slave, the act of linguistic transgression is associated with the figure of a woman. In the beginning of the play, Palaestrio, the cunning slave, presents before the audience his most devious stratagem: the beautiful prostitute, Philocomasium. Unlike Clytemnestra and Penelope, Philocomasium is not a socially respectable female character. But like these two mythical figures, she opens up a subversive textual path. The depiction of Philocomasium bears a striking resemblance to the Hesiodic Pandora. She, like Pandora, operates at the tension between truth and illusion, essence and appearance, fact and fantasy, and, more particularly, sincere and insincere love. Yet, above all, it is in her archetypal feminine speech that the promiscuous Philocomasium becomes Plautus's version of Pandora:

Os habet, linguam, perfidiam, malitiam atque audaciam, confidentiam,
confirmatam, fraudulentiam.
qui arguatse, eumcontra vincat iureiurando suo:
domi habet animum falsiloquiom, falsicum, falsiurium,
domi dolos, domi delenifica facta, domi fallacies.
(*MG* 189–92)

[She has cheek, a lot of lip, loquacity, audacity, also perspicacity, tenacity,
mendacity.
someone accuses her, she'll just outswear the man with oaths.
She knows every phony phrase, the phony ways, the phony plays.
Wiles she has, guiles she has, very soothing smiles she has.—Trans.
E. Segal]¹¹

Plautus speaks of Philocomasium's language via a meditation on her physiognomy. For him, the feminine speech act is integral to Philocomasium's professional art, the art of seduction. He then focuses on the woman's audacious speech. Her audacity is naturally related to her illegitimate status as a noncitizen and a prostitute; at the same time, however, her impropriety is indicative of the female kind in general. Reviving the Hesiodic image of the first woman as the figure of duplicity and deceit, Plautus establishes the female form of speech as emblematic of the genre of the comedy of errors. More specifically, his misogynistic portrayal identifies the woman as the generic sign of comedy and thereby provides an exemplary case of an engendered genre.

FROM THE EFFEMINATE ELEGY TO THE FEMININE TEXT

In Latin literature we recognize a novel phenomenon that makes the illegitimacy of the feminine voice the mark of a new form of writing. In the first century BCE the genre of love elegy was born, a male discourse dedicated to women. It is concerned with their appearance, with their desire, and with their literary taste. Roman love elegy creates a new mode of writing that centers on the figure of the *puella*. Although Roman love elegists are mainly concerned with the dramatization of their suffering *ego*, their discourse was considered provocative precisely because it (allegedly) gives voice to feminine concerns.

Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid direct their poetic energy toward their beloved, making the *puella* the object of their desire and the subject matter of their poetry. The relationship of the elegiac poet and his romantic partner is a main topic of elegiac love poetry. For the poet, the *puella* provides a case study that serves as the basis of his claim to authority in erotic matters.¹² As Propertius explains:

Quaeritis, unde mihi totiens scribantur amores,
unde meus veniat mollis in ora liber.
non haec Calliope, non haec mihi cantat Apollo:
ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit.

(2.1.1–4)

[You ask how it is that my loves are so often transcribed,
how it is that my soft book is on everyone's lips.
It is not Calliope, not Apollo that sings these things to me.
The girl herself creates my inspiration.]

The *puella* rivals the divine poetic authority of Calliope and Apollo.¹³ She dictates the *mollis* ("soft," "effeminate") character of Propertius's book. In *Amores*, Ovid too associates his poetry with a feminine (mortal) source of inspiration.¹⁴ In a later poem he distinguishes his didactic works from traditional didactic poetry whose paternalistic authority was grounded in divine inspiration:

non ego, Phoebe, datas a te mihi mentiar artes,
nec nos aerae voce monemur avis,
nec mihi sunt visae Clio Clusque sorores
servanti pecudes vallibus, Ascre, tuis.

(AA 1.25–28)

[I shall not falsely argue that you, Phoebus, gave me my "Arts"; nor am I informed by the voice of the bird in the air, and Clio with her sisters did not appear to me while tending herds in your valleys, Ascra.]

Ovid not only excludes himself from the tradition of didactic poetry beginning with Hesiod; he also diverges from Propertius's soft position and, as I shall show, grounds his didactic stance in the provocative image of a female authority, an expert in love. Ovid's novelty is manifest once we locate his erotodidactic poetry against the background of the effeminate discourse of Roman love elegy.

In *Remedia Amoris* we find a collective term used for the love poets: *teneri poetae* (757).¹⁵ This qualification, the love elegy's generic softness, is part of the rich effeminate vocabulary utilized by Roman love poets, the gender-inverted rhetoric that marks their role as wounded lovers and marginalized poets. One begins to see how, in specifying love elegy as *tenera*, Roman love elegy traverses conventions of masculinity and authorship. More specifically, the elegiac self-understanding distinguishes, for example, the superior epic form from the lower-status love elegy. This self-understanding should be examined in elegiac terminology as a discrimination between the feminine and the masculine. That is why Propertius, who defines love elegy in opposition to epic, constructs the dichotomy between these opposed genres in terms of a gender relationship. As D. F. Kennedy writes, "So, elegy is defined by means of *mollis* [soft], which discursively aligns itself with the feminine, whilst epic is by implication aligned with the masculine, and elsewhere is characterized as *durus* [hard]."¹⁶ It is important to remember, however, that in the Roman tradition "soft discourse" does not signify the essentially feminine. Soft discourse only articulates a sense of femininity through a paternalizing perspective. *Mollis* is a term that pertains to a masculine hierarchy. In other words, conceived as *mollis*, love elegy is gendered as effeminate. But gendering love elegy as effeminate is especially typical, in my view, of Propertius.¹⁷ Only Ovid, among all the Roman love elegists, actually turns to femininity as a source of powerful inspiration. It is no coincidence that he uses *tener*—a word with a less negative connotation than Propertius's *mollis*—to characterize love elegy's softness. Ovid is the first love elegist to release his feminine discourse from the rule of masculine prejudices. He rejects the conventional derogation of love elegy as effeminate and, instead, allows elegy to emerge as a didactic feminine form of discourse.

Ovid, as I hope to show, usurps feminine authority. On the face of it,

his integration of the feminine in to his writing seems to belong to the effeminate discourse characteristic of love elegy. "Effeminacy" and "femininity" are culturally related terms based on gender dichotomies, but they are, nevertheless, distinct. The effeminate is an attribute of men, a derogative description of a form of masculinity that does not meet the ideal as defined by the norms of society. Effeminacy signifies a mixed, impure, infected form of masculinity whose flaw is derived from its affinity to femininity. Femininity, on the other hand, is understood as an attribute of women, and it typically appears in the context of the opposition between feminine and masculine natures. Tagging something as "feminine" can be derogatory or affirmative, and it can be done by either male or female speakers. Femininity is hence a dialectical concept whose meaning rests on its relationship with masculinity.

In shaping his new persona as a didactic poet, Ovid redefines his poetic field, relating it to a feminine source and adhering to norms of feminine aesthetics. We should notice in particular how the effeminate discourse of *mollitia* so characteristic of Propertius is replaced in Ovid's erotodidactic poetry by the boldness of feminine expression. How then, we should ask, is Ovid's feminization of love elegy distinct from the effeminate discourse of his predecessor, Propertius?

Studies of Roman love elegy show us that gender categories are frequently applied in order to characterize different forms of textualities. The feminine aspect of love elegy derives first of all from the love elegist's inferiority complex and the genre's lowly status. It is common knowledge that the engendering of love elegy as effeminate is, in the Roman context, a mark of its inferior standing. But there is still much to be said about the kind of poetics created by the effeminate text. This is exactly the kind of work being done in recent postmodern and feminist readings that seek to unravel the textual significance of the effeminate text.

In the early 1970s the study of Roman love elegy was the setting for a discussion of the relationship between love and writing—of gender and genre—a discussion that has since been elaborated and extended.¹⁸ This ongoing discussion contains two important insights. The first asserts that Roman love elegy is not an exclusively masculine form of writing,¹⁹ but, rather, a genre generative of a hybrid, or androgynous, form of textuality. The second insight posits that masculine and feminine elements are interwoven in the figure of the Roman love elegist, particularly in the cases of Propertius and Ovid.²⁰ A prevailing opinion among readers of Roman love elegy is that, in Roman culture, the feminine aspects of the elegy's ego—

for example, the soft form of its writing—are constructed through effeminate features. The tendency to label the male lover and his poetry as soft and servile implies that the love elegy's speaker holds a morally depraved position, hinting at decadent failings in his Roman (patriotic) education.²¹

Modern responses to the effeminate persona of the Roman love elegy are varied, and yet all approaches share a perception of the love elegy's effeminacy. Interestingly, almost every attempt to decipher the poetic effect of the effeminate elegiac discourse is carried out using the poetry of Propertius. Duncan Kennedy, for instance, explains how the sexual ambiguities of the Propertian male subject both reflect and construct literary and political positions. According to Kennedy, the perverse masculinity of the effeminate ego should be understood in light of its creation of a vague form of textuality that resists consistency.²² This means, in particular, the construction of a discourse that can hardly be fitted into a unified political framework. Readers of the Roman love elegy are still baffled by the question the genre itself seems to foster: does the representation of weak masculinity reflect an anti-Augustan speaker, a subversive voice in a patriotic and conservative society,²³ or a pro-Augustan speaker? Is effeminacy the ground for and the backdrop of a performative kind of discourse that is a parody of a subversion of common values that it actually supports? Is this genre, in other words, intended to shock the educated Roman reader and post a warning about the pitfalls threatening his world?²⁴

For Kennedy, the ambiguous political position of the love elegy is especially reflected in Propertius's elegies. Take, for example, his observation that "what Propertius wrote has always been open to appropriation to serve different interests."²⁵ Here, and elsewhere as well, Kennedy sees Propertius's political ambiguity reverberating in the textual ambiguity of his elegies. Maria Wyke has written about the love elegy's double meaning as an effect that "destabilizes traditional Roman gender categories."²⁶ As such, the sexually ambiguous ego propagates an ambiguous poetic discourse that defies conventional Roman categories of the feminine and masculine.²⁷

In his recent treatment of this poetic phenomenon, Paul Allen Miller seeks to redefine the meaning of Propertius's use of gender ambivalence. He is concerned with the nature of a discourse that constantly blurs the distinction between gender categories. Miller's reading of Propertius's elegies draws on feminist psychoanalytical theories and claims not only that the Roman love elegy plays with conventional gender categories, but that its main innovative force is in the circumscription of a third semantic space, a zone of meaning between the orthodox Roman categories of masculinity

and femininity. Miller argues that the effeminate discourse of Roman love elegy positively marks a new form of textuality: "What we have in these poems is a very intricate language game in which the poet, by occupying both sides of the opposition but never being wholly present on either side, inscribes the possibility of a third position that can only be expressed in terms of the simultaneous contradiction between an equivalence of both sides."²⁸

The negation of conservative masculinity effected by the effeminate discourse of love elegy results in the creation of a third subjective form of expression, which, according to the Roman mind, is neither typically male nor female. Miller conceives of the elegy's third option as "both radically critical and deeply conservative, both inside and outside the system"—in other words, as feminine.²⁹ Like Kennedy and Wyke, Miller refuses to read Propertius's effeminacy in terms of the conventional binary oppositions. He often prefers the term "femininity" to "effeminacy." For example, referring to several of Propertius's elegies in Book 2, he writes that they "present Propertius as speaking in the feminine, a discourse that eludes the conventional binary oppositions of official and subversive, pro and con, conscious and unconscious."³⁰ In his symbolic claim that "Propertius is a woman," Miller attempts to avoid the derogative connotation attached to effeminacy in Roman culture, and instead to reload the term "woman" with a new textual dimension.³¹

The mediation of postmodern feminist thought allows Miller to recognize the discourse of Roman love elegy as a feminine phenomenon and, with the help of post-Lacanian feminists such as Clément, Cixous, Kristeva, and Irigaray, to construe Propertius's feminine textuality.³² I agree that the effeminate discourse of Roman elegy demonstrates "the elegists' rhetoric of ambivalence, oxymoron, and paradox," and that this effeminate rhetoric "closely approximates that of Woman as defined by post-Lacanian feminists."³³ Yet I do not see how this reading escapes the binary framework in which the elegiac discourse historically and culturally resides. In the Roman context, the third discursive option opened up by the feminine discourse of Propertius remains an inherent part of the derogative language of *mollitia*, or what was understood by the Roman reader as typical of the effeminate discourse.

In this sense, Miller's analysis of Propertius's effeminacy does not rest on ancient conceptions of the feminine. Propertius does not allow the feminine any articulation that is independent of the masculine. His rhetoric of gender inversion is still informed by the powerful discourse of effeminacy

that officially constitutes the masculine ideal. Consequently, the problematics raised by Propertius's love elegy that feminist readers tie to the genre's mastery over the female remain unresolved. Despite its mollification of the masculine, Propertius's love elegy does not seem to name feminine subjectivity as its explicit discursive source.³⁴ Such an opportunity is present, in my view, in Ovid's erotodidactic writing, which explicitly adopts and elaborates the feminine presence. What female authority hides behind the Ovidian persona of the *praeceptor amoris*? I suggest that we search for her in the reading lists and the catalogues of authors provided by Ovid in his amatory poetry.

THE EROTODIDACTIC PERSONA

In addressing himself to a female audience in Book 3 of *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid offers the seductive *docta puella* a list of poets she ought to be familiar with. Among the Greek poets, he cites Callimachus, Philetas, Anacreon, Sappho, and Menander.³⁵ The Latin poets he recommends are Propertius, Gallus, Tibullus, Varro, Virgil, and, of course, himself, calling attention to his *Amores*, *Ars Amatoria*, and *Heroides*. This list of authors is neither the first nor the last one he composed.³⁶ He presented an initial selection of canonical poets in his earlier *Amores* 1.15, and a similar list in *Remedia Amoris* 757–66. The differences between the three lists seem minor. However, a comparison is revealing of a significant change reflecting, perhaps, a change in Ovid's self-understanding as a love poet. An obvious expression of this development is his inclusion of a female author, the Lesbian poet Sappho, in the lists found in *Ars* and *Remedia*. His recognition of the importance of a feminine poetic fluency marks a process of change in Roman love elegy—a change that can be described as a withdrawal of the effeminate discourse in favor of a feminine form of textuality.

The reference to Sappho in *Ars* and *Remedia* is not a coincidence. Her canonization helps Ovid to redefine his poetic self-understanding as an elegist and as a love teacher. As we shall see, Sappho charges Ovid's erotodidactic texts with feminine boldness. The first signs of the new Ovidian stance can be recognized in *Amores*. Ovid abandons the insecure position typical of his Roman love elegy. He aspires to the worldwide reputation of those glorious poets listed in Book 1:

... mihi fama perennis
quaeritur, in toto semper ut orbe canar.
(*Am.* 1.15. 6–7)

[I seek an enduring glory so that I may always be sung throughout the whole world.]

In this poem, which concludes Book 1 of *Amores*, Ovid returns to the literary dilemma that opened the collection (*Am.* 1.1): the antithesis between lofty epic and light love elegy. Both elegies address the literary status of the love elegy genre. But the list of valued poets in *Amores* 1.15 modifies the authorial stance assumed in *Elegy* 1.1.³⁷ *Elegy* 1.15 signals a turn in Ovid's ideas concerning the sources and literary significance of the love elegy. While the introductory elegy reflects his poetic insecurities as a love elegist, *Amores* 1.15 attempts to cover up these insecurities by defying the inferior classification of the genre.

Amores 1.1 is a masked *recusatio* poem in which Ovid camouflages the provocative nature of his decision to write a love elegy. Instead of declaring his opposition to the canonical and well-established epic form, Ovid avoids responsibility for his problematic choice of genre. The programmatic poem, rather, presents him as conflicted and embarrassed by Cupid's intervention, which diverts the innocent poet from his initial plan of writing national poetry. Love elegy is thus the work of Cupid.

This narrative is abandoned, however, toward the end of Book 1. And so, in *Amores* 1.15, Ovid no longer appears as the confused subject manipulated by the whimsical Cupid. He changes his narrative strategy as he embarks on constructing a new poetic biography. This transformation in the poet's self-understanding is not untypical of the genre of love elegy. The book of love elegies characteristically involves an exploration of the relationship between time and desire, and between time and writing about desire, and thereby makes it possible to present seemingly incoherent "moments" of the poetic ego. However, the incongruity between *Elegies* 1.1 and 1.15 may nevertheless be interpreted in a linear way: they may be understood as different points on the trajectory leading from Ovid's initial apologetic position to his provocative persona.³⁸

In *Amores* 1.15 Ovid adopts a literary biography inspired by the tension between conservative and liberal perspectives on love elegy. Swimming against the current, he follows neither the traditional career of a Roman soldier nor the prestigious profession of law. Furthermore, since he internalizes the gaze of the conservative reader, Ovid knows that his poetic career is considered morally flawed, and even attacked as parasitical: the pastime of a lazy and idle youth who refuses to serve the Roman public despite his suitable social and physical qualifications (*Am.* 1.15.1–5). This

typical Roman perspective is the background for Ovid's self-presentation as a love elegist, a nonconformist writer who proudly cultivates his field of competence. And since he is assured of an appropriate, albeit unorthodox, audience, Ovid can pronounce the following vision:

Ergo etiam cum me superius adederit ignis
vivam, parsque mei multa superstes erit.
(*Am.* 1.15.41–42)

[Thus when the final flame has eaten me up,
I shall nevertheless live on, and a great part of me will survive.]

Poetic desire finds ambitious expression here. By the end of his first book of love elegies, Ovid is heading toward canonization. In spite of the common prejudice against love elegy as “a work of an idle talent” (*ingenii inertis opus*, 1.15.2), he is nonetheless confident of a glorious future for his poetry. He therefore demands the same respect and recognition for love elegy that is accorded the glorious epic (Greek and Latin), tragedy, and comedy.

Elegy 1.15 takes issue with two audiences, two potential responses. On the one hand, Ovid anticipates the response of a conservative critic, a traditionalist reader, a follower of the patriarchal tradition, *mos patrum* (1.15.3). On the other hand, he welcomes the appreciative connoisseur, an open-minded reader whom he imagines as his ideal addressee. This ideal reader is the anxious lover.³⁹ This means that the lover has a dual role: not only the subject of love elegy, but also its sophisticated reader. Ovid's poetic persona is thus tied to his conception of his audience. The poet's confidence is dependent on an exclusive audience that will embrace his poetry and on the degradation of his critics, whom he discounts as vulgar (*vulgus*), impressed and entertained by cheap representations (*vilis*).⁴⁰

The catalogue of authors in *Amores* 1.15.9–30 demonstrates Ovid's high aspirations for the genre. For him love elegy should be canonized as one of the distinguished traditional genres, on a par with the works of Homer, Hesiod, Callimachus, Sophocles, Aratus, Menander, Ennius, Accius, Varro, Lucretius, Virgil, Tibullus, and Gallus. In *Ars Amatoria* 3.329–48, however, he gives expression to more specific poetic concerns. At this later stage of his literary career the now-celebrated author of *Amores*, *Heroides*, and *Ars Amatoria* 1 and 2 is no longer preoccupied with the relationship of love elegy to the canon. By the time he comes to write *Ars Amatoria*, that generic

category is already far more firmly established and refined. Ovid seems quite comfortable identifying himself with a group of poets sharing a common interest in love. The lists of poets in *Amores* and *Ars Amatoria* may be compared side by side in table 4.1.

It is notable that in *Ars Amatoria* the list of Greek authors consists mainly of love poets. Homer, Hesiod, Sophocles, and Aratus are left off the list, while three others are added: Philetas, Anacreon, and Sappho. This leaves the Greek contingent with no representative epic or tragic poets. Similarly, the new Latin list presents a more uniform picture than the one in *Amores*. Ovid leaves out Ennius, Accius, and Lucretius and creates instead a more unified group of love elegists. In identifying Propertius, Gallus, and Tibullus as the successors of the Greek love poets, Ovid gestures toward the emergence of a tradition, or a literary history, of a new Roman genre. At the same time, his inclusion of Virgil's *Aeneid* and Varro's *Argonautae* is something of a surprise. As Roy Gibson has observed, Ovid ignores the famous amorous episodes in these two epics and strangely emphasizes the national element of the first and the mythical background of the second.⁴¹ He finishes off the list with his own amatory works, positioning them alongside Varro and Virgil and perhaps hinting at his wish to be immortalized together with the poets of this most acclaimed genre, the epic. We can understand this as either a Freudian slip or a gesture of sheer opportunism. For despite his explicit effort to make love elegy an

TABLE 4.1

	<i>Amores</i> 1.15.9–30	<i>Ars Amatoria</i> 3.329–48
GREEK AUTHORS	Homer Hesiod Callimachus Sophocles Aratus Menander	Callimachus Philetas Anacreon <i>Sappho</i> (my emphasis) Menander
LATIN AUTHORS	Ennius Accius Varro Lucretius Virgil Tibullus Gallus	Propertius Gallus Tibullus Varro Virgil Ovid

autonomous genre, Ovid nevertheless continues to conceive of it in the context of the domineering presence of the epic. In so doing, he arrogantly dissociates himself from the group of elegiac poets to whom he naturally belongs.

While the gallery of poets in *Ars Amatoria* is a didactic gesture toward the education of woman as the seducer, the list in *Remedia Amoris* is intended for lovesick readers, who are inscribed as both male and female.⁴² Consequently, the earlier recommended reading list reappears in *Remedia* as a register of banned books. The type of reading the lovesick ought to avoid is understood to be constitutive of the genre of love elegy. The texts that were once considered to be effective in teaching the art of seduction become dangerous when one is recovering from love. Ovid therefore counsels his audience to avoid reading the poetry he has commended in the third book of *Ars Amatoria*. But although these two reading lists are allegedly intended for different audiences⁴³ and divergent functions, they are also mirrors of each other, and as such contain the crystallization of Ovid’s conception of the genre of love elegy (see table 4.2).

Remedia’s classification of love elegy is far more concise. Ovid avoids associating love poetry (comprising elegy and lyric) with other genres and removes the comedian Menander from the list.⁴⁴ Nor is epic included.⁴⁵ In dismissing both Varro and Virgil, Ovid finally separates the Latin elegists from the epic poets. Earlier in *Remedia*, Ovid had underscored the autonomy of the love elegy genre by equating his own poetic achievement with that of Virgil:

TABLE 4.2

	<i>Ars Amatoria</i> 3.329–48	<i>Remedia Amoris</i> 757–66
GREEK AUTHORS	Callimachus	Callimachus
	Philetas	Philetas
	Anacreon	<i>Sappho</i> (my emphasis)
	<i>Sappho</i> (my emphasis)	Anacreon
	Menander	
LATIN AUTHORS	Propertius	Tibullus
	Gallus	Propertius
	Tibullus	Gallus
	Varro	Ovid
	Virgil	
	Ovid	

tantum se nobis elegi debere fatentur,
quantum Vergilio nobile debet epos.
(*Rem.* 395–96)

[All that noble epic owes to Virgil,
Elegy confesses to owe me.]

Virgil undoubtedly constitutes a considerable source of anxiety for Ovid, who had an extended and unsettled relationship with this celebrated poet. For Ovid, Virgil is the representative of a literary tradition that relegates love elegy to the status of a negative example. Throughout his diverse literary career, Ovid engaged in an ongoing dialogue with Virgil's poetry that revealed his own admiration for and envy of (not to mention inferiority complex regarding) Virgil. It is interesting to note that Ovid's most audacious and challenging statement about the venerable master appears in *Remedia Amoris*. In this late erotodidactic work, Ovid allows himself to reestablish his relationship with Rome's most distinguished poet. Here he overcomes his feelings of inferiority by crowning himself the greatest master of love elegy, and as the one who has led the genre to full maturity. This puts him on a par with Virgil. It is no coincidence that at this stage of his career as a love poet, Ovid wishes to seal the love elegy genre with his own signature. He knows that *Remedia Amoris* marks its Roman terminus, being both his last erotic elegiac work and, more generally, the last specimen of Roman love elegy.⁴⁶

Even more singular in Ovid's poetic stance and self-canonization is the way he turns to Sappho as a means for impregnating his poetry with a feminine presence. Ovid is the only Roman elegist who not only underscores her contribution to the genre of love elegy but also, more specifically, emphasizes her significance to his own writing. In introducing the seven love poets in *Remedia Amoris*, Ovid gives each a general attribute. Callimachus is labeled *non est inimicus amori* (759), "not inimical to love." Philetas is harmful (*noces*, 760), while Anacreon "does not prescribe rigid morality" (*nec rigidos mores . . . dedit*, 762). Tibullus and Propertius are able to affect the "indifferent" (*tutus*) reader (763–64); Gallus softens the "tough" (*durus*) one (765). Yet as Ovid introduces Sappho, his language turns personal. He singles out the effect of her poetry as transformational: *me certe Sappho meliorem fecit amicae* ("certainly, Sappho made me better for my girlfriend," 761).

In contrast to his general characterizations of the love poets, Ovid relates to Sappho as the one who has left a personal imprint on his love life.⁴⁷ Reading Sappho made him *meliores*—more loyal, more honorable, more gracious, or, rather, more desirable to his girlfriend. In other words, Sappho embodies the source of Ovid's superiority and great success, both as a love elegist and as a male lover. She is a feminine role model for the erotodidactic poet.

SAPPHO'S LASCIVIOUSNESS

Sappho's symbolic presence in *Ars* and *Remedia* is intrinsic to Ovid's self-fashioning as a "lascivious" author. Adopting her illegitimate stance—her status as a female author—allows him to construct his own unconventional didactic stance. Sappho's *lascivia* is first mentioned by Ovid in *Heroides*, a text in which her importance is conspicuous. In this collection of epistles, he shows his deep interest in the fictional persona of the female writer. Ovid is well known for his fascination with the feminine experience, voice, and persona, which he variously assumes throughout the work. The letters present a rich cast of female figures whose unusual character is shaped through their appearance as writers. In referring to *Heroides* as the kind of work unknown to others (*ignotum hoc aliis illi novavit opus*, AA 3.346), Ovid bases his claim to novelty not on the invention of a new genre, but rather on the *Heroides'* strangeness.⁴⁸

The *Heroides* is a strange textual phenomenon because it ascribes the act of writing to women.⁴⁹ For a Roman author, a woman's text represents the poetic "other." Writing like a woman is, as Joseph Farrel notes, "a response to an attempt to impose silence."⁵⁰ What is the significance of this feminine trait for Ovid? His writing usurps this form of anomaly and makes the effect of strangeness essential for his poetic self-refashioning.

Ovid's personal rapport with Sappho goes back to *Heroides* 15, where he adapts and dubs her voice, reinventing the story of her heterosexual love affair with Phaon. Sappho's singular status among the women writers in the *Heroides* is conspicuous, grounded in the fact that she is the only one for whom the art of writing is an integral part of her identity. Readers of the *Heroides* have shown how the identity of Sappho as a poet (*poetria*, 15.183) merges with Ovid's identity.⁵¹

The submersion of Sappho's identity into Ovid's lies behind the problem of authenticity that arises in the context of the reception of Epistle 15. In recent years the old debate regarding Ovid's authorship has been replaced with a discussion of the manner in which authenticity is tied to the

poem's female voice.⁵² In what way does Ovid's feminine voice correspond to the historical Sappho? Is there any way in which an Ovidian language could make a place for Sappho's own voice? Can we speak of a genuine Sapphic voice independent of its traditional representations?

The difficulties in isolating the feminine voice from the male author are not only part of the experience of reading Ovid's *Heroides*; they also rise in the context of Sappho's own reception. Consider, for example, Page duBois's description of the effect of Sappho's poetry on her ancient readers:

Her body and its desires [are] in tolerable, its speech too lyrical, too hysterical, too caught up in the battles of love, scenes of marriage, physical longing for the beloved to participate in the sober work of philosophy, even an erotic philosophy like Plato's.⁵³

It is difficult to isolate Sappho's writing from the way she was perceived and read in antiquity. Her poetry, according to duBois, cannot be isolated from the readers' responses, discourses, and values, all of which reconfirm and intensify her subversiveness and her irregularities as *lasciva* woman and poetess. Here, Sappho's subversive authority lies in her archetypal position as a female author who, as duBois writes, transgresses the traditional boundaries of ancient poetics.

Sappho is an outspoken and powerful figure who arouses intense desire among readers. This view—expressed more than once in the reception of her poetry—can be detected in the unique role her passionate discourse plays in Western culture.⁵⁴ Sappho's eroticism is conceived as bolder and more violent than that of Archilochus and other male poets. She transgresses not only thematic boundaries (topics considered respectable), but also boundaries of femininity (speech considered decorous for a female).

Sappho's desire was the subject of fantasies for Greek and Latin comedy writers who referred to the story of her unrequited heterosexual love for Phaon. Plautus, for example, refers to her extraordinary passion in *Miles Gloriosus* 1246–47: *Nam nulli mortali scio optigisse hoc nisi duobus / tibi et Phaoni Lesbio, tam mulier se ut amaret*. Wishing to convey the prostitute's excessive desire toward the soldier, the slave subtly remarks that only Sappho could equal the prostitute in her passionate intensity.⁵⁵

For Ovid, therefore, Sappho is not just the name of the historical Greek poetess. He does not cite her name just to commemorate one of his poetic influences. In *Heroides*, and in *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris*, the name

"Sappho" epitomizes the idea of a feminine text. More specifically, in *Heroides* 15.45–50 Ovid uses the term *lascivia* in relation to Sappho's traditional image as a woman of insatiable desire. He depicts her in the act of recollecting the pleasure she had with Phaon, emphasizing her unique sexual appetite and erotic knowledge:

haec quoque laudabas, omni quae a parte placebam,
sed tum praecipue, cum fit amoris opus.
tum te plus solito lascivia nostra iuvabat,
creberaque mobilitas aptaque verba ioco,
quique, ubi iam amborum fuerat confuse voluptas,
plurimus in lasso corpore languor erat.

(*Her.* 15.45–50)

[And you used to praise these things also; I was pleasing in every aspect, but then especially when the task of love came around. Then my lasciviousness used to please you more than you were accustomed and my quick mobility, and my joking words, and the languor that was great in our tired bodies when the desire of both of us had already mingled together.—Trans. Sara H. Lindheim]⁵⁶

Is there a connection between Sappho's sexual and Ovid's literary promiscuity? Can her "quick mobility" and "joking words" be read in analogy to his rhetorical prowess? Is the commemoration of her promiscuity an Ovidian way of reflecting on, of refracting, his own image as a lascivious poet?

Ovid's notion of Sappho should be approached through his use of the term *lascivia*. Not only does he describe her as lascivious in *Ars*, but, as we shall see, he himself is also remembered as the most lascivious love poet among the Roman elegists. We will first examine Sappho's *lascivia* in the context of the didactic tradition. The way the ancients identified her sexual preference with her authorial position is illuminating. Horace's reference to her as *mascula* (*Epist.* 1.19.28) was interpreted by Porphyrio in the following way: "'Masculine Sappho,' either because she is famous for her poetry, in which men more often excel, or because she is maligned as having been a tribad."⁵⁷ Sappho's power—that is, her masculinity—is manifested in her prominent position as a literary authority as much as in her active role as a lover of women.

Porphyrio construes Sappho's masculinity as originating from a literary authority that is uncommon among women. But there is more to say

about the bold image of Sappho as a literary persona. She is known as a didactic authoress, which is also an atypical position for a woman. What's more, her irregular authority is derived from her role as a teacher of love. Sappho's prominent standing in the erotodidactic tradition explains why she has become a prominent source of inspiration for Ovid.

In *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris*, Sappho's importance as a love poetess and as an erotodidactic authority over Ovid is emphasized. He canonizes her not only as a lyric poet, but also as a teacher of love. In recommending her poetry to lovers, he implies the didactic value of her love poems, which is confirmed again by his personal experience in *Remedia* 761. In this sense, Ovid's deployment of Sappho echoes Socrates' use of a feminine persona—Diotima—to endorse his own erotic conceptions. Though Diotima does not actually participate in the famous gathering, she is introduced by Socrates as the mother (the feminine source) of his erotic discourse. We might detect in *Tristia* a similar image of poetic conception. In *Tristia* 3.14 Ovid expresses to an unnamed friend his deep concern for the destiny of his works. He distinguishes, however, between his banned love-guides and the rest of his poetic corpus. Ovid elaborates on this parental metaphor, imagining himself not just as a caring father to his erotodidactic books, but as a feminine father by means of an analogy to Jupiter's delivery of Pallas Athena: *Palladis exemplo de me sine matre creata carmina sunt* ("in Pallas fashion were my verses born from me without a mother," *Tr.* 3.14.11). This conversion of the physical act of giving birth into an image of masculine creation originates with Plato. More specifically, the *Symposium* presents the most emblematic feminine characteristic—giving birth—as the governing principle of the erotic field. And so Ovid, the erotic master, follows Plato in conjuring this image of parenthood. In alluding to Jupiter's motherless delivery, Ovid reproduces the Socratic gesture toward Diotima. Like Socrates, Ovid points to himself as a masculine mother replacing an absent feminine original. Sappho is the absent role model. She is the poetic mother of Ovid's erotodidactic poetry.

During Ovid's time, "Sappho" was considered a mythical name, associated with other mythical wise women such as Diotima and Aspasia, who achieved their authority as exemplary teachers of love.⁵⁸ Ovid has chosen Sappho as a natural erotodidactic role model precisely because, as a love poetess, she represents better than Diotima and Aspasia the erotodidactic field of poetry.⁵⁹ This group of women, however, is also associated with the philosophical male expert on love, Socrates. Diotima and Aspasia appear

as erotic teachers in the Socratic literature;⁶⁰ “beautiful Sappho,” *Sappho kale*, is included in *Phaedrus* among the ancient wise men and women (*sophoi*) who spoke and wrote about love. Sappho, “the tenth Muse,” inspires Socrates’ notion of love.⁶¹ But it is the second-century Maximus of Tyre (*Orations* 18.9) who supplies an arresting comparison between the two and provides a Socratic portrayal of Sappho:

ὁ δὲ Λεσβίας τί ἄν εἴη ἄλλο ἢ αὐτό, ἡ Σωκράτους τέχνη ἐρωτική; δοκοῦσι γάρ μοι τὴν καθ’ αὐτὸν ἐκάτερος φιλίαν, ἡ μὲν γυναικῶν ὁ δὲ ἀρρένων, ἐπιτηδεῦσαι. καὶ γὰρ πολλῶν ἐρᾶν ἔλεγον, καὶ ὑπὸ πάντων ἀλίσκεσθαι τῶν καλῶν· ὅτι γὰρ ἐκείνῳ Ἀλκιβιάδης καὶ Χαρμίδης καὶ Φαῖδρος, τοῦτο τῇ Λεσβίᾳ Γυρίννα καὶ Ἀτθίς Ἀνακτορία· καὶ ὅτι περ Σωκράτει οἱ ἀντίτεχνοι Πρόδικος καὶ Γοργίας καὶ Θρασύμαχος καὶ Πρωταγόρας, τοῦτο τῇ Σαπφῶι Γοργῶ καὶ Ἀνδρομέδα· νῦν μὲν ἐπιτιμᾷ ταύταις, νῦν δὲ ἐλέγχει καὶ εἰρωνεύεται αὐτὰ ἐκείνα τὰ Σωκράτους.

[What else could one call the love of the Lesbian woman than the Socratic art of love? For they seem to me to have practiced love after their own fashion, she the love of women, he of men. For they said they loved many, and were captivated by all things beautiful. What Alcibiades and Charmides and Phaedrus were to him, Gyrinna and Atthis and Anactoria were to her; what the rival craftsmen Prodicus and Gorgias and Thrasymachus and Protagoras were to Socrates, Gorgo and Andromeda were to Sappho. Sometimes she censures them, at other times she cross-examines them, and she uses irony just like Socrates.—Trans. David A. Campbell]⁶²

Although the writer creates a parallel between Sappho and Socrates based on their homoeroticism, their similar attitude toward the *technē erotike*, or what is better known as the Socratic expertise in the art of love, is more important to him. Sappho is considered an erotic expert in the Socratic manner since she mainly practices love as a discourse. She maintains love relationships using the same techniques that Socrates employs when he charms and lures his interlocutors into conversations: the seductive means of irony and refutation.

Maximus’s Socratic portrayal of Sappho can help us draw out the genealogy of a family of mythical figures with a fundamentally erotic existence: Sappho, Diotima, Aspasia, Socrates, and Ovid. This group establishes a guild of teachers of love whose mythological patroness, I would argue, is

Pandora. As already shown, Hesiod's first woman is the human embodiment of Eros. Plato, following the example of Hesiod's Pandora, also makes Socrates an embodiment of Eros. With her charming and deceitful ambiguities, Pandora (and, likewise, Socrates) is responsible for bequeathing erotic knowledge to the world. The myth of the origin of love is, hence, tied to the myth of femininity. This is how I explain Plato's decision to credit feminine sources for Socratic erotic teaching. Despite the privileging of masculinity and homoeroticism in *Symposium*, erotic knowledge is originally attributed by literary tradition to women.⁶³ And so the erotic elements specified by Diotima as zeal (*syntaxis*, 206b) and eagerness (*spoude*, 206b, 208b),⁶⁴ characterizing as they do the search for beauty, goodness, happiness, and immortality, also define the most fundamental feminine competence, which Diotima conceives as the ultimate goal of desire—giving birth. Love is initially a feminine power, which is why knowledge of it is transmitted to Socrates by a woman.⁶⁵ Plato's understanding of the erotic field as fundamentally feminine explains the reputation of Socrates as a love teacher, midwife, and matchmaker—all feminine characterizations made by Plato and other ancient authors.⁶⁶

Ovid associates himself with this Socratic erotodidactic tradition, already attributing in *Amores* 3.1.44 the competence of the female procurer (*lena*) to the elegy. Although New Comedy provides the main source for this stock figure, Ovid's elegiac *lena* should also be linked to the philosophical tradition that identifies the Socratic art as an art of matchmaking.⁶⁷ In other words, there is an interesting connection between the Ovidian image of love elegy as a *lena* and the image of the philosopher as a procurer. The image of Socrates as a philosophical procurer is inseparable from his image as the human embodiment of Eros. Being *daemonic*, in the same manner Eros is (*Symp.* 202d–3d),⁶⁸ Socrates' philosophical drive is understood to be a mediating one between the human and the divine.

THE LASCIVIOUS TEXT

The list of poets in *Ars Amatoria* establishes the category of love elegy. It is interesting to note that Ovid's list diverges slightly from that of Propertius, whose roll of authors (2.34) serves as his model. First, Propertius (unlike Ovid) bases the literary history of the love elegy exclusively on Latin literature. Beginning with Varro,⁶⁹ he then cites Catullus, Calvus, Gallus, and, finally, himself. As we have seen, Ovid's list does not include Catullus or Calvus, and yet, despite these differences, it bears the mark of Propertius's list, especially in the way in which Ovid's evocation of Sappho

echoes Propertius's nomination of Catullus, the only poet singled out as lascivious:

Haec quoque *lascivi* cantarunt scripta Catulli

Lesbia quis ipsa notior est Helena.

(Propertius 2.34.87–88, my emphasis)

[On these very topics the writings of lascivious Catullus sing,
Through which Lesbia has become more famous than Helen.]

Although Catullus is not explicitly named on Ovid's list, Propertius's reference to him is, in part, present. In characterizing Sappho as *lasciva* (AA 3.331), Ovid is, in fact, echoing the inclusion of Propertius's Catullus.

Catullus's relationship with Sappho is complicated. His famous adaptation (poem 51) of her poem 31 presents a "corrected" version of her homoerotic expression. By replacing Sappho's female gaze with a male one, Catullus succeeds in introducing a conventional love triangle.⁷⁰ Moreover, his moralizing ending is a pure invention, a foreign (Romanized) addition to the Greek source. Catullus attempts to translate Sappho according to Roman ethical standards, but his interest in her goes beyond that.

Catullus is undeniably inspired by, and indebted to, Sappho's erotic poetry. His love poems to Lesbia indicate a symbiotic relation to Sappho. By naming his object of desire Lesbia and identifying her as the motivating force of his love poetry, Catullus makes Sappho the Muse of his love poetry. Hence, she is not simply an admired poet from a glorious Greek past. She masks the face of the beloved as much as she hides behind the beloved's face.⁷¹ Catullus's Sappho stands as a symbol for love poetry. The constitutive role he assigns her as a female author, his unconventional gesture of submitting his poetry to *feminina auctoritas*, is, I think, what makes him lascivious in the eyes of Propertius. Borrowing from Propertius's idiom, Ovid ascribes the sign of lasciviousness directly to Catullus's Greek model, Sappho. In so doing, Ovid shifts the emphasis from Catullus to his predecessor. *Nota sit et Sappho (quid enim lascivius illa?)*, he writes (AA 3.331, my emphasis): "Let Sappho be also known (for what is more *lascivius* than she?)."

The inclusion of Sappho in Ovid's canon is striking primarily because she is the only female author in it. Moreover, she is mentioned as a role model neither by Propertius⁷² nor by Tibullus.⁷³ And in this respect, Ovid is the first among the Roman love elegists to present her as a central

authorial figure.⁷⁴ Although it can be argued that her appearance on Ovid's list stems from the fact that *Ars 3* is addressed to female readers,⁷⁵ this should not prevent us from appreciating the central role Ovid assigns her in creating the Roman love elegy. Following Catullus's Romanized image of Sappho, Ovid turned her into an emblem, a constitutive element, or a generic sign, of his own erotic writing.

As we have seen, in Roman culture Sappho's name symbolizes excessive speech, an immoderate passion, an unofficial and subversive discourse. To write poetry under her influence, as Ovid does, is to commandeer an illegitimate freedom of speech, or, in other words, to become a licentious poet.⁷⁶ Armed with this feminine attribute, Ovid asserts himself as the illegitimate love poet whose poetry is severed from the institutional consensus and the normative codes of moderate speech. Identifying itself with intense and unrestrained erotic discourse, Ovid's erotodidactic poetry declares itself to be feminine. This does not mean that his erotodidactic discourse sacrifices the idea of rationality. On the contrary, it seeks to master and perfect the logic and grammar of a distinctive erotic technique. However, since the grammar of *eros* is intrinsically tied to the expressions and performances of intense passion, it follows that Ovid celebrates his didactic form of textuality by adopting a provocative vocabulary. This makes his erotodidactic Muse no longer *mollis* but, rather, *proterva*, *lasciva*, and *levis*—all feminine attributes specifying an unrestrained form of expression, whose effect is fundamentally designed to be shocking.

OVIDIUS UTROQUE LASCIVIOR

It is well known that the love elegy occupied a peripheral place in Roman culture.⁷⁷ Quintilian's response is representative of the institutional reception of this genre prior to and during the time Ovid was writing his erotodidactic works. In Book 10 of *Institutio Oratoria*, which addresses methodological questions concerning education and thus comments on the authors and literary genres that should be studied, Quintilian devotes little attention to elegiac poetry. In a general remark about the elegiac poets, he mentions Callimachus and Philetas, who were included in Ovid's list as well (*Rem.* 755–65). Quintilian treats them as second-rate poets:

Sed ad illos iam perfectis constitutisque viribus revertemur; quod in cenis grandibus saepe facimus ut, cum optimi satiati sumus, varietas tamen nobis ex vilioribus gratata sit. Tunc et elegiam vacabit in manus sumere. (*Inst.* 10.1.58)

[But we must wait till our powers have been developed and established to the full before we turn to these poets, just as at banquets we take our fill of the best fare and then turn to other food which, in spite of its comparative inferiority, is still attractive owing to its variety. Not until our taste is formed shall we have leisure to study the elegiac poets.—Trans. H. E. Butler]⁷⁸

Quintilian's culinary metaphor assigns love poetry a superfluous status. Its place in the poetic menu is insignificant, an offering to readers who are already satiated and satisfied. The reader, he argues, must be mature before encountering elegiac poetry. That is, his personality must be crystallized and his aesthetic and intellectual judgment must have reached full development. Interaction with elegiac poetry at this stage will neither harm nor teach the reader. Quintilian's ideal reader is, thus, indifferent to the illicit teachings promised by love elegy. According to Quintilian, one should not take love elegy seriously: one might be captured by its allure. Readers like Quintilian assign love elegy the same threatening quality that a seductive woman might present for the sexually inexperienced man. He therefore stipulates the conditions for safely reading promiscuous texts.

But does Ovid promote such a reading in *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris*? He has no desire to create a safe and harmless text; nor does he want to protect his readers. Ovid is interested in literature that shocks.⁷⁹ But if his love elegy is intended to be shocking and its ideal reader, as Alexander Dalzell suggests, is someone who is willing to be shocked, then Ovid's ideal reader is the very person who the love guide claims is *not* its legitimate addressee. Alison Sharrock has shown that although Ovid excludes married women from his circle of disciples (*AA* 1.31–34),⁸⁰ this exclusion has the opposite effect.⁸¹ The seductive act of denying love's pleasure to married women becomes doubly powerful. In addressing married women, the love guide both rejects them and marks them as potential readers. The didactic shock of *Ars Amatoria* is effected in the book's paradoxical address to an audience of married women that it also disallows. By excluding married women from its legitimate audience, Ovid ultimately converts respectable females into the guide's ideal audience, an audience composed of promiscuous and subversive readers. These married women represent the readership for which he has created the promiscuous erotodidactic genre. In other words, the literary act, according to Ovid, is designed to attack the unsuspecting reader, whose naiveté and habitual complacency usually prevent any exploration of nonconformist

or individualistic experiences. The love guide, in fact, offers just such experiences within its imaginative didactic framework.

Turning again to Quintilian's dismissive attitude to elegy, we can now examine his specific reference to Ovid as the most lascivious love poet of all.⁸² His remark contains a double reproach. First, it associates Ovid with the peripheral genre of love elegy; then it emphasizes that, within this genre, Ovid is more preoccupied than the others with all that the term *lascivus* connotes.⁸³ In the classical and postclassical public consciousness, Ovid's name is often associated with lasciviousness and lightness. This perception is a result of Ovid's own work. He uses *lascivia* (and other terms) as a slogan, a programmatic phrase, and, inevitably, as a blueprint. It is little wonder that his critics recycled the stigmatizing expressions that Ovid provided them.

What is the collective meaning of *lascivia*, *levitas*, and *protervitas*? Are they synonyms, creating a family of terms that define the erotodidactic genre? Ovid calls Sappho *lasciva* (AA 3.331): "Let Sappho be also known (for what is more lascivious than she?)" ; *nota sit et Sappho (quid enim lascivius illa?)*. What does he mean by this? What does he want to say about Sappho? Is this a biographical remark that slanders her way of life as frivolous, playful, and mischievous? In other words, is it a direct reference to what was considered her licentious sexual life? Or, more plausibly, is Ovid referring to her unrestrained, shameless literary style? In contrast to Quintilian's *lascivior*, Ovid's is not judgmental. He brackets the connotations of moral degeneracy that certainly arise in readers' minds and focuses instead on her boldness as a love poet. Her undisciplined image is connected to her status as one who breaks the norms of writing, being both a lover of women and a female writer. This blatant violation, which Ovid identifies with the mythical feminine position, is crucial to the literary act. In fact, it is crucial to art in general. Freedom of expression is apparently a gift that only a minority can receive.

MUSA PROTERVA MEA EST

In *Remedia* 357–97 Ovid's text digresses to consider the criticism directed against his erotic writing. He accuses his opponents of literary envy (*livor*, 365, 369). They are envious of his freedom of speech (*licentia*, 371), which for Ovid is an indispensable artistic virtue.⁸⁴ For his detractors, however, and especially within the Roman cultural context, *licentia* is a sign of immorality commonly associated with a lack of sexual restraint. He thus

emphasizes his critics' disgust at the promiscuously erotic dimension of his work:

nuper enim nostros quidem carpsere libellos
 quorum censura Musa proterva mea est.
 (*Rem.* 361–62)

[recently some people attacked my books;
 their criticism, however, is that my Muse (poetry) is shameless.]

Ovid's tactic is striking. On one level, he cites the critics who accuse him of creating a shameless poetry. They say that his Muse is *proterva*. Their "shameless Muse" is not far from Cicero's description of the promiscuous feminine figure, the courtesan, *proterva meretrix* (*Cael.* 49). But Ovid does not quote this slander word for word; rather, he changes it in to the first person. The critics say that "my Muse is shameless," he says. He not only repeats his accusers' words but also reasserts them in the indicative. At the same time, while his accusers derogatively allude to his sexual licentiousness, he provides a different interpretation of *Musa proterva*. The way in which he conceives of his Muse cannot be equated with the way they conceive of her. His Muse is *proterva* not because he blatantly discusses sexual acts: this accusation is groundless in light of Ovid's disdain for explicit pornographic images (*Rem.* 359–60). Ovid's *Musa proterva* should be understood in terms of his use of *levitas* and *lascivia*. These are the attributes he uses to legitimize his decision to dedicate himself to the illegitimate field of *eros*. These terms ensure that his poetry will become what it proclaims itself to be: shamelessly pathbreaking. In this sense, Ovid's *Musa proterva* grows out of his conception of love elegy as Venus's procurer (*lena*, *Am.* 3.1.44). The love elegist is *protervus* because he mediates between the goddess of love and human beings, thus continuing the tradition of Socrates, Aspasia, Sappho, and Pandora, who all function as erotic intermediaries.

Feminine Subjectivity and the Self-Contradicting Text

In chapter 4 I examine the emergence of Ovid's unique authority within the tradition of Roman love elegy. My reading of his singularity as a love elegist focuses on his poetic persona, his adaptation of the feminine voice with its overtones of lasciviousness and transgression. The term *Musa proterva* marks Ovid's understanding of the intimate relationship between poetry, *eros*, and the feminine. The connection between *eros* and the feminine is already present in the myth of the first woman. Specifying the domain of love as illogical and irrational, Hesiod presents Eros as an illicit cosmological element whose form of activity is the unconstitutional: Eros is an antithesis to good reasoning and thoughtful advice, δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν (*Th.* 122). This destructive force finds its embodiment, according to Hesiod, in the figure of Pandora whose *charis* (charismatic sexuality), endowed by Aphrodite, is the source of erotic sorrows, πόθον ἀργαλέον καὶ γυιοβόρους μελεδῶνας (*W&D* 66). Subsequently, a woman's language of love is traditionally understood as provocative and transgressive. By the same token, the ideology of silencing women may be understood in the light of the attempt to overcome the erotic by means of rationality.

In the present chapter, I turn to the different ways in which Pandora's image pervades and structures Ovid's erotodidactic texts. In what sense can a text be said to emulate Pandora? She is called a deceiver; she is said to have a lying appearance. Her language is never transparent. Instead of revealing her inner intentions, it hides them. It is always ambiguous, a medium of concealment. Language as simulation is a theme central to Ovid's erotodidactic discourse. Not only does he focus on the craftiness of language as crucial to the art of love, but his own composition is also construed as a textual conundrum, a mimesis of Pandora.

The tension between genuine emotion and emotional gestures, inner passion and simulation of passions, is intrinsic to Ovid's erotic teaching. Consequently, it is not surprising that responses to his didactic works have questioned again and again the text's sincerity and integrity. In this sense, there is a close affinity between the figure of Pandora and Ovid's love guides. The first woman and the erotodidactic text in cite similar critical responses—in fact, both encourage misogynistic readings.

We shall see that Ovid makes woman's self-contradicting character the constituting principle of his *Ars* and *Remedia*. Hence my discussion will focus on the palinodic structure that links these works. Plato's *Phaedrus* tells us that the history of the literary palinode leads back to a woman. As Socrates turns his back on his first oration against love and shifts to an alternative speech in favor of it, he points to the source of this rhetorical gesture. Punished by the gods for his defamation of Helen (he had blamed her for the Trojan War), the poet Stesichorus is said to have composed a new poem of recantation in which he completely purifies her. That is to say: the text of contradiction originates as a response to the conflicting presence of a woman.¹ In this respect, the Platonic antecedent of Ovid's antithetical treatment of love already elucidates the intrinsic connection between palinodic textuality and the mysterious figure of the femme fatale.

ARS AND REMEDIA: METADISOURSE, LANGUAGE GAMES, AND THE PROBLEM OF SINCERITY

Composition of *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris* brought Ovid's career as a love poet to an end. These works constituted something of a cul-de-sac for the genre of the Roman love elegy. Explanations for the death of the genre point to the Augustan political milieu, to Ovid's own relationship with the emperor, and, most significantly, to Ovid's unique standing among Roman love elegists. But there is another reason why *Ars* and *Remedia* led Latin love elegy to a point of self-exhaustion: the genre came to an end once Ovid abandoned the subjective and personal in favor of the didactic.

The impact of *Ars* and *Remedia* on the love elegy may be likened to Medusa's gaze. Reading the love guides must have had a destructive—even castrating—effect on those who strove to write original love elegies. The guides' metaliterary perspective blocked other poetic attempts:² once the love elegy as a genre turned into an object of inquiry, it lost its autonomy and generic authority. Whereas the form had served the amatory poet as a means of investigating the erotic field, *Ars* and *Remedia* methodically

explore the form itself. This methodological approach to the elegy's erotic poetics affects the genre's vitality and novelty. In systematically mapping the erotodidactic discourse, Ovid's innovation casts a long shadow over the creative field for future elegiac poets. His work threatens to make all amatory contributions faint replicas, mere borrowings or imitations of the precepts established in *Ars* and *Remedia*.³

The destructive (or deconstructive) impact of Ovid's systematization of love elegy is well described by Gian Biagio Conte:

Ovid, before being the author of elegiac texts, is the addressee of the passionate poetry of Catullus, Gallus, Propertius, and Tibullus. He has listened to their words, learned to understand how the system that programs them is constructed, discovered what contradictions invest it, deconstructed it by finding its necessary relations; now he knows how to reconstruct it in his own way. Ovid's text accepts the genre's conventions; it places itself in a relation of intertextuality, indeed of continuation, with the lineage of elegy—a vista of citations, a mirage of structures that are *déjà vu* and *déjà vécu*. But at the very moment he acquires a superior understanding of the literary characteristics of elegy (the way in which it “works out” reality), Ovid stops.⁴

Conte characterizes the transition from the “standard” Roman love elegy to *Ars* and *Remedia* as a new attempt “to look at elegy instead of looking with the eyes of elegy.”⁵ “Looking at elegy” implies a distance from the elegiac point of view. Furthermore, it implies an inversion of the poetic role undertaken by the elegist. The very attempt to articulate the field of *eros* as a form of *Ars* suggests an understanding of love according to which the elegist's immersion in amorous passion, suffering, and sickness no longer provides any privileged access to the truth of the phenomenon he describes.

In this respect, Ovid's shift from an expressive to a metalinguage of love marks more than a mere didactic transition. *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris* signify the radicalization of the idea that language is the inner form of the phenomenon of love. For Ovid, the importance of language exceeds its ability to express and communicate emotions, to articulate and shape amorous experiences. Language, rather, is a condition necessary for entertaining emotions. In other words, love, according to Ovid, is an intrinsically textual phenomenon—one that, in its essence, is language-dependent. Hence, while his explicit subject of investigation is, of course, Amor, the primary focus of the lover's handbook is the verbal dimension

of erotic interaction. It is in the domain of language that love takes place, and it is precisely rhetorical competence that enables the lover to take part in and eventually master the love situation. As Ovid guides the student of love from naiveté to maturity, the criterion of progress is explicitly tied to his or her developing capacity for more refined forms of verbal achievement. While still an *indoctus*, the lover unable to incite desire is described as a mute. For Ovid, this absence of articulation is the principal obstacle to aspiring, would-be lovers.

Ovid's course begins with the potential lovers' mutual acquaintance. During this preliminary stage of the erotic relationship, verbal communication is based on the respective social skills of the pair. These lovers are only able to engage in "small talk" that consists of *publica verba* (AA 1.144). The establishment of a common discursive ground is, according to Ovid, necessary for proceeding to the next rhetorical phase, that of explicit persuasion. At this stage the lover will need to meet higher discursive demands, ones that require adequate preparation and learning.

Disce bonas artes, moneo, Romana iuventus,
 non tantum trepidos ut tuere reos:
 quam populus iudexque gravis lectusque senatus,
 tam dabit eloquio victa puella manus.
 (AA 1.459–62)

[I advise you, young Roman man, learn the noble Arts,
 not only that you may defend trembling
 clients; a girl, like an audience, a critical
 judge, or the select senate, will surrender, conquered, to eloquence.]

Since for Ovid the love relationship is textual at heart, he construes it in terms of the relationship between speaker and audience, between deliberate linguistic activity and the reader's response. When he instructs men in the art of seduction, he conceives of the female erotic role as that of a reader. In corollary fashion, he presents a woman's readership as in itself an art that can develop and reach maturation. The woman can gradually develop into a sophisticated interpreter, and Ovid thus describes her by an analogy using three distinct images taken from the field of public speech. The woman is comparable to *populus*, the crowd in a public meeting; to *iudex gravis*, a critical judge in a private case; and, finally, in her most elite form, *lectus senatus*.

But the first, crudest stage in the development of feminine reading skills is the most telling. Comparing the woman to the Roman *populus* evokes Ovid's first mention of the audience of *Ars Amatoria*: *hoc populus: si quis in hoc artem populo non novit amandi* (AA 1.1). *Ars* opens by addressing any Roman who is ignorant of the art of love. In identifying the seduced woman as *populus* (AA 1.461), Ovid analogically positions her in the same place as his intended readers, implying that women are, in fact, ideal readers of his erotic discourse. Likewise, this analogy positions the male reader of *Ars* 1.1 in the place taken up by women in *Ars* 1.461, implying that the readers of Ovid's guide are expected to undergo a comparable hermeneutic development.⁶

Erotic ignorance is, according to Ovid, a preliminary stage that must be transcended. That transcendence depends on the development of sophisticated methods of reading. The ignorant reader (belonging to the *populus*) can, in principle, become an expert (*iudex gravis*, or even *lectus senatus*) in matters of love. In becoming great lovers, Ovid's readers, by definition, become masters of their master's art. Once they turn into competent lovers, they become experts in love, inheriting their master's art, the language of love. They are made into poetic lovers.

Not all men are poets, but all true lovers are poets.⁷ An exemplary lover is, what's more, a love poet, whom Ovid contrasts with seducers who lack a poet's skills.⁸ The celebration of the poet as the ultimate lover has a strong performative value, highlighting his superior techniques of seduction in comparison with those of his rivals. But Ovid is not simply a seducer. He is, first of all, a love instructor, teaching a useful technique that is applicable to both men and women. He teaches the art of love by providing the reader with a discursive model for imitation: the language of love poetry. In so doing, he denies that love poetry belongs only to the circle of Roman love elegists. Rather, he makes the erotic elegiac form accessible to the average Roman.

Ovid's instructions for becoming a seducer or for appearing to be in a state of love were considered a clear indication of the performativity that is to be found at the heart of his guides. *Ars* and *Remedia* were read as rhetorical works in the negative sense, and romantic readers accused Ovid of making fun of "true" love. Such criticisms, which were recurrent in early responses to *Ars* and *Remedia*, have consistently stood in the way of accepting Ovid's didactic intention at face value.

Ovid certainly does not consider "love" to be a synonym for honest, consistent, and truthful affection. Indeed, emotions are not integral to

the natural constitution of a human being as far as he is concerned. They are neither innate nor inborn but are, rather, social and cultural constructions created in and developed through our language, as well as being the semiotics of gestures and performative action. For Ovid, simulation and pretending are not foreign to the phenomenon of love; in fact, they are integral to it. The lie, in particular, is an indispensable, constitutive component of the love relationship: Ovid explains the importance of lying at almost every stage of the development of that relationship. But such amorous lies are indicative of neither an immortal soul nor a corrupt mind. Since he considers the external manifestations of love essential to erotic experience, his teachings invite potential lovers to externalize their passions while bracketing questions about the actual existence of passion. The art of love teaches readers to perceive themselves as lovers. That is to say, it guides a person in acquiring an external perspective on his or her emotions. The externality of emotions is a conception that also governs the deterioration of love. In *Remedia*, for example, the didactic tools initially supplied in *Ars* now achieve the opposite result. Emotions can develop or disappear, but they do so in accordance with our simulative capacities.

Quod non es, simula, positosque imitare furores;
 sic facies vere, quod meditatus eris.
 saepe ego, ne biberem, volui dormire videri;
 dum videor, somno lumina victa dedi.
 deceptum risi, qui se simulabat amare,
 in laqueos auceps decideratque suos.
 (*Rem.* 497–502)

[Pretend to be what you are not, imitate the appearance of being burned out: thus you will realize what you have been planning on doing .
 Often, in order not to drink, I wanted to seem to be sleeping: while seeming to sleep, my eyes were overcome by sleep. I have laughed at the self-deluding man who, while pretending to be in love, fell like a bird-catcher into his own trap.]

We can say that Ovid's theory of love is expressive. More precisely, it is a theory that recognizes the expressive. For Ovid, "what is latent is unknown" (*quod latet, ignotum est*, AA 3.397). And there is no desire for what is unknown. This is illustrated by his visual depiction of Aphrodite:

Si Venerem Cous nusquam posuisset Apelles,
mersa sub aequoreis illa lateret aquis.

(AA 3.401–2)

[If Coan Apelles had never created Venus,
she would still be buried deep down in the ocean.]

Aphrodite's dependence on visualization is illuminating. Her beauty, which is analogous to inner passion, remains futile and ineffective as long as it is hidden from the public. In the Ovidian lexicon, love becomes a vitally meaningful phenomenon only when it is embodied in a relationship. It then turns in to a dynamic feeling, a passion that is interwoven in to the amorous fabric. Ovid's interest in love is of a behaviorist type. He has no concern for the "inner" experience or for the "inner life" of love. Similarly, he disregards the traditional metaphysical aspects of love. In privileging performance, Ovid's psychological approach to love justifies the essential status of lies in love relationships. Deceit in the sphere of love is seen to be a kind of art. The erotic lie is a form of mimesis, functioning in a manner that is analogous to representation in painting, or to the effect of identification in poetic and rhetorical language.

The question of the lover's authenticity or sincerity is consequently irrelevant for the instructor of love. The concept of sincerity rests on the opposition between private and public, between internal and external, between a person's inside and outside.⁹ A sincere person is one who appears to be what he or she actually is. Authenticity then becomes the identity between appearance and reality. But Ovid rejects this opposition, since he regards the external as informing the intelligibility of internal life. For him, externalization determines who you are. Only through representation does the inner experience fulfill its essence. This also means that Ovid's exclamation "Let your love and sincere devotion be visible to your girl" (*tunc amor et pietas tua sit manifesta puellae*, AA 2.321) cannot be assigned, as it commonly is, to the category of insincerity. That is, Ovid speaks a language that defies the opposition between sincerity and insincerity.

In his preoccupation with the discursive models that comprise the practice of love, Ovid may be said to foreshadow the kind of theoretical disposition we find, for example, in Roland Barthes's poststructuralist *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* (1977). Like Ovid, Barthes studies love in a manner that is free from any essentialist concerns. His aim is not to understand the essence of love, but to decipher the "grammar" of the discourse of love.

In other words, Barthes treats love in a manner that is no longer dominated by the traditional question of what love is; like Ovid, he allows new questions to take its place. How do we speak of love? What is the lover's language? For Barthes, love and the lover both belong to a discursive field that is the object of his investigation. "What is proposed, then," he writes, "is a portrait—but not a psychological portrait; instead, a structural one which offers the reader a discursive site: the site of someone speaking within himself, *amorously*, confronting the other (the loved object), who does not speak."¹⁰

Barthes's *Fragments* has exerted significant influence on interpreters of Roman love elegy. Groundbreaking studies such as Paul Veyne's *L'élégie érotique romaine: L'amour, la poésie et l'Occident* (1983), Molly Myerowitz's *Ovid's Games of Love* (1985), and Duncan F. Kennedy's *The Arts of Love: Five Studies in the Discourse of Roman Love Elegy* (1993) have explored the poetic originality of the Roman elegiac discourse of love.¹¹ In particular, they have led to a reassessment of the genre's aesthetic value by redefining the concept of love as a linguistic and literary phenomenon. Current scholarship has internalized a linguistic perspective in its reading of Ovid and has, accordingly, made room for an understanding of *Ars* and *Remedia* as forms of metadiscourse whose field of inquiry is the discourse of love.¹² Yet in the context of the important changes brought about by such discursive approaches, the didactic claim of *Ars* and *Remedia* has been unable to call for an y serious attention. When Ovid's guides are read in terms of the exemplary semiotic matrix of speech acts and bodily gestures that they present, his playfulness and lightness are indeed integrated into an apparently didactic framework.¹³ But when the "teaching" of *Ars* and *Remedia* is read in terms of their ability to fashion readers as masters of an erotic language game, speech act and performative-oriented interpretations of Ovid have remained committed to a very narrow understanding of what the didactic core of these works might be.¹⁴ In particular, might not openness to the centrality of language games in Ovid ultimately reproduce the orthodox conception of him as a frivolous and insincere poet?¹⁵ Can we, in other words, acknowledge the intrinsic role of language in the Ovidian treatment of love without leveling the didactic aspect of his project?

In antiquity, the guides' problematic didactic value was seen as deriving from their scandalous character.¹⁶ But why was it so difficult to consider Ovid's didacticism reliable? His debt to the Roman didactic tradition is unquestionable: Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*, Cicero's rhetorical and ethical

works, and Virgil's *Georgics* are important influences.¹⁷ And yet Ovid's guides remain outside this traditional didactic Latin discourse, considered by most of their readers, ancient and modern alike, to be a generic transgression that begets "a subgenre of the mock didactic."¹⁸ Ovid's didactic modus also generates an enigmatic form of textuality that is full of paradoxes and self-contradictions. I will mention just a few of these.

Ovid's didactic framework abuses the classical opposition between virtue and pleasure, thus making utility the ethical core of the didactic genre, which that then became first and foremost a means of communicating immoral and futile content.¹⁹ More specifically, since it was notoriously dedicated to nonmatrimonial love, Ovid's erotodidactic poetry became, by definition, anti-institutional.²⁰ We can say that he formally writes a didactic work whose essence is decidedly antididactic. Taking into account the traditional hostility toward (vain) pleasures and passions, it is no wonder that Ovid is accused of promulgating an empty discourse. It is this kind of discourse that Cicero conceives as time-consuming—that is, consuming men's precious time by turning it into *otium*. Reading love poetry thus becomes as corrupting as a pleasure-seeking life.²¹

Cicero's contempt for self-indulgence entails a condescending response toward literature that reflects it. His position is typical of didactic works such as Lucretius's Epicurean epic. The ferocious condemnation of love in Book 4 of *De Rerum Natura* turns out to be, as Martha Nussbaum has forcefully argued, a renunciation of erotic poetry as well. According to Lucretius, liberation from the illusionary grip of love means that lovers are released from the spell of love poetry. "Once the illusions of love are removed," Nussbaum writes of the didactic message of this antierotic poem, "there is no love poetry to write."²²

We find a similar argument when we attempt to discover what is didactic in the erotodidactic. Conte points to the death of love elegy as the crux of Ovid's didactics: "The *Remedies against Love* present themselves as a cure for those in love, but in fact they function as a remedy against a form of literature."²³ How does the remedy against love elegy correspond to the didactic project of that genre: that is, the *ars poetica* of love elegy? What is the value of an *ars poetica* if the genre it discusses is eventually condemned?

The ambivalent status of Ovid's didactic project is tied, of course, to the complexity of his poetic persona (see chapter 4). Here, however, we are less concerned with Ovid's self-understanding (e.g., as a poet, as a teacher). Our focus, rather, is on the uniqueness of the textual form of *Ars*

Amatoria and *Remedia Amoris*, which exemplifies well my understanding of what I call the feminine dimension of the text. Ovid's *Ars* and *Remedia* function, as we have seen, at the intersection of the erotic, the didactic, and the highly discursive. This is what I mean by recognizing them as genuine erotodidactic works. Yet this textual intersection is a place of conflict. The sensual claims of *eros*, the ethical claims of "teaching," and the theoretical claims of a language-order that insists on its conspicuousity cannot fully comply with one another. And this is precisely why *Ars* and *Remedia* provide such a good example of "Pandora's textual heritage": they allow us to see the manner in which their unfolding as texts depends on those unresolved tensions that characterize the first woman.

THE PALINODIC STRUCTURE

With this in mind, we may now turn to what is probably the most perplexing textual problem of *Ars* and *Remedia*. Both are guides that concern themselves with the lover's art as it develops from the first signs of erotic attraction to the dissolution of the amorous relationship. In the first sections of *Ars*, Ovid instructs his reader to identify the proper object of love, to spread the amorous net, to pursue and seduce the object of one's love, and then to successfully sustain an ongoing love relationship. In *Remedia*, the instruction has an entirely different goal. The lover has now lost love, and the guide subsequently offers a way to come to terms with that loss. The means of this remedial process is renunciation: the lover will cure his or her unhappiness with the understanding that love itself is a sickness. Only then will the former lovers learn to accept the superiority of an emotionally detached position to the state of being in love.

But as the erotodidactic guide begins to disclaim the possibility of love, it seems to be turning against itself and, in so doing, creating a puzzling literary form: a palinode, or a structure of contradiction. What, then, is the pedagogical value of *Ars* and *Remedia* if they are read together? No doubt, Ovid intended for the two parts—the pursuit of and then the recovery from love—to be inseparable. Together the works create a unique reading experience, deriving from a textual paradox that, in turn, reflects the conflicted experience of love. Ovid begins *Remedia* with an explicit reference to the contradiction generated by his two didactic poems:

Legerat huius Amor titulum nomenque libelli
bella mihi, video, bella parantur ait.

(*Rem.* 1–2)

[Amor read the name and title of this book and said:
I see that wars are prepared against me.]

The negotiation between *Ars*, which addresses passion as a current experience, and *Remedia*, which addresses passion as a past experience, is not unproblematic for Ovid. He understands that this structure puts the value of *Ars* into question. Again and again he reassures his reader that reading *Ars* was not a pointless exercise. He promises that the advice he gave in the first work will not lose its meaning or validity in the face of the ultimate curative antithesis of the second work. Both parts of his project, he assures the reader, both the “pro” and the “con,” can still be seriously read.

Nec te, blande puer, nec nostras prodimus artes,
nec nova praeteritum Musa rexit opus.
(*Rem.* 11–12)

[I do not betray you or my own arts;
this new muse does not unravel my past work.]

Again, he assures the reader that *Remedia* does not threaten the status of *Ars* as a didactic text, or invalidate its advice:

Naso legendus erat tum, cum didicistis amare;
idem nunc vobis Naso legendus erit.
(*Rem.* 71–72)

[Just as in the past the reading of Naso was invaluable for you to learn how to love,
so reading Naso now will be invaluable for you.]

But even such authorial reassurances fail to alleviate the difficulty that Ovid's dualism generates. The juxtaposition of *Ars* and *Remedia* creates a literary puzzle that puts his reliability and sincerity in question. How can we interpret this double gesture? Why should we abstain from what had previously been encouraged? How can Ovid's didactic position be taken seriously if his text is self-contradictory? How can the reader trust this author? And how can the author claim authority for his writing? What is the significance of this textual contradiction? The contradiction between *Ars* and *Remedia* cannot be easily dismissed; it calls for reflection. And yet, in reflecting on this contradiction, we need to resist the natural temptation

of doing away with the contradiction on which we reflect. In other words, the contradiction that surfaces in reading *Ars* and *Remedia* is a real one and should be addressed as such. Any interpretation of these works must rest on a reading that embraces the structure of contradiction as integral to them. At the same time, however, the fact of contradiction should not be understood as a literary curiosity, an interestingly amusing irregularity that just happens to be part of Ovid's textuality. Instead, we should read the paradoxical structure of *Ars* and *Remedia* as reflecting a new textual awareness on his part, namely, his understanding of what a text is and how it functions. As I shall show now, these guides to love are themselves guided by the assumption that texts are intrinsically connected to forms of subjectivity, and that they create forms of autobiographical understanding. What kinds of subjectivity are reflected in *Ars* and *Remedia*? What kind of self-knowledge can be derived from these works?

PALINODE AND NARRATIVE

Let us begin to answer these questions by noticing first why it is that we, as readers of these texts, come to experience a contradiction. The sense of contradiction arises when we follow the didactic claims of both *Ars* and *Remedia* and find ourselves facing two conflicting interpretations, two mutually exclusive points of view on the value of love. From a logical point of view, it seems impossible to treat love with both enthusiasm and disdain. The law of noncontradiction finds its expression, as Aristotle explains, in the fact that "it is impossible for anyone to believe the same to be and not to be" (*Metaph.* 1005a.23–24). And yet the gist of this principle, which is "most certain of all" and which "everyone must know who knows anything," is not merely logical. The impossibility of contradiction is, according to the paradigmatic Aristotelian formulation, not just an internal form of the way we think; it primarily belongs to the ontological structure of things. That is to say, "it is impossible that contrary attributes should belong at the same time to the same subject" (1005a.25). In our context, this means that love cannot be worthy and valuable and *at the same time* also unworthy and valueless. So, what is Ovid saying? Is this student of the Roman schools of rhetoric simply showing his skills in the art of the *controversiae* (cf. Seneca, *Controv.* 2.2.9 ff.)? Is this merely an exercise in presenting both sides of an argument in order to demonstrate the speaker's rhetorical virtuosity?

The mere play of rhetorical argument cannot explain Ovid's use of the palinode, which, in my view, must be tied to his deep understanding of

the relationship between language, love and contradiction.²⁴ When thinking of contradiction, we typically deal with an essentially atemporal structure, one that is severed from the concreteness of temporal duration. This can be seen, for example, in the dependence of the Aristotelian definition of the law of contradiction on a punctual, self-identical “now” (“It is impossible that contrary attributes should belong at the same time to the same subject,” *Metaph.* 1005a.25). For Ovid, however, there is no such ideal—metaphysical—point in time. Contradiction, therefore, is already part of our ordinary experience of temporality. In other words, the conflicting perspectives on love that he presents are not at all rooted in the unity of one and “the same time.” The pursuit and renunciation of love do not share a self-identical temporal modality but should be read, rather, in terms of the different temporal points of view that *Ars* and *Remedia* embody.

To put this simply, I think that the palinode created by *Ars* and *Remedia* must be understood within the horizons of a narrative underlying Ovid’s articulation of the experience of love. *Ars* and *Remedia* are intertwined as parts of a narrative through which the narrator’s (and hence the reader’s) passage in time is construed. This is also the connection to the texts’ didactic dimension. *Ars* and *Remedia* develop a metanarrative that instructs its readers on how to shape their own love narratives or, better, how to understand themselves in love within the horizons of a narrative.

What kind of narrative is elicited by *Ars* and *Remedia*? What is the relationship of Ovid’s love narrative to the two central narrative models in antiquity? The two types of narrative available for describing the development of an erotic relationship are the tragic and the comic. Tragic love tales conventionally end with a painful loss of love, most often expressed in untimely death, as in the stories of Phaedra’s and Dido’s suicides. The comic narrative, in contrast, adopts the “happy ending” that is characteristic of erotic comedies and the Greek novel. Conventional comic scenarios begin by imposing a separation on the lovers and conclude, after a series of adventures and complications, with their reunion, which signals the beginning of renewed love. In this context, it is not hard to recognize the innovative character of the narratological horizons of Ovid’s *Ars* and *Remedia*. For Ovid, the love story is opened up to the possibility of a new form of ending, a third narrative option that forges a middle ground between the poles of tragedy and comedy. On the one hand, he rejects the terminal solution to the problem of love offered by tragedy’s literal or symbolic death. On the other hand, he dismisses comedy’s ultimate happy reunion of the loving couple. What he offers instead is a therapeutic shift,

opening up the possibility of a meaningful life after love's demise. By juxtaposing *Ars* and *Remedia*, he creates a retrospective narratological framework within which a lover can escape the grip of the past. For Ovid, healing requires the rejection of a lover's prior amorous experience. This renunciation is a strategy for coping with the painful past. In this sense, we may say that, when read together, *Ars* and *Remedia* constitute a narrative of transformation. Accordingly, *they* present a chronology of two fields of consecutive, albeit separate, experiences. *Ars* comes first, representing an erotic experience that ultimately fails. And *Remedia* provides a perspective by which the "now" of *Ars* can turn into a past. *Remedia* can serve as a remedy for the failures of *Ars* precisely by putting the present of *Ars* into relief.

But does the present of *Remedia* simply cancel the presence of *Ars*? Can the relationship between *Ars* and *Remedia* be read in terms of the sublimation of the earlier poem by the later one? Clearly not. This would leave *Ars* bereft of any genuine significance. Furthermore, it would dissipate the sense of contradiction—Pandora's sense—so central to the Ovidian text. While couching his treatises on love in a transformational narrative, Ovid explicitly resists any privileging of one temporal stage over the other. *Ars* and *Remedia* are both present to the reader as legitimate possibilities. Ovid is unwilling to grant the second part of his palinode any absolute priority. Unlike Diotima, who delineates in Plato's *Symposium* the path by which a lover could transcend bodily love and earthly desire and reach the only stage where "man's life is ever worth the living"—that is, the one where he "has attained this vision of the soul of the very beautiful" and hence "will never be seduced again by the charm of gold, of dress, of comely boys, of lads just ripening to manhood" (*Symp.* 212d)—Ovid does not see in *Remedia* the cancellation of *Ars*.²⁵ He is indeed concerned with the possibility of redeeming the sick lover from his predicament:

Utile propositum est saevas extinguere flammās,
nec servum vitii pectus habere sui.
(*Rem.* 53–54)

[To quench savage flames is a useful objective,
also not to have a heart subjected to its own weakness.]

Yet his articulation of a place and time in which the lover is no longer enslaved by a painful love does not imply that the possibility of love should

be forsaken. *Remedia* is not meant as a cure from a stage in human life that must be overcome and left behind forever. It denotes, rather, the possibility of freeing oneself from specific love episodes by allowing them to become part of the past.

Grounded in a narrative of transformation, the lover's passage from *Ars* to *Remedia* is not, however, conversional.²⁶ Instead of a linear transformation in which one stage of life completely gives way to another, Ovid presents a cyclical narrative that embraces both *Ars* and *Remedia*. In other words, he thinks of the life of the lover as a perpetual oscillation between the two options. In this context, we may better understand Ovidian claims that might otherwise seem awkward within the framework of *Remedia*: "All love is overcome by a new love" (*successore novo vincitur omnis amor*, *Rem.* 462); or "I've always loved, and should you ask what I am doing now, I love" (*ego semper amavi / et si quid faciam, nunc quoque, quaeris, amo*, 7–8). We should understand in a similar way Ovid's request to *Remedia*'s readers that they ultimately return to *Ars*:

quaeris, ubi invenias? artes, i, perlege nostras:
 plena puellarum iam tibi navis erit.
 (*Rem.* 487–88)

[You ask where you can find a new love? Go read my *Arts* again:
 your ship will soon be full of women.]

Evoking a retrospective reading of *Ars* is a way to epitomize the essentially unresolved character of the lover's life. Moreover, it is Ovid's way of underscoring the need for a cyclical reading of his erotodidactic works. Reading *Ars* and *Remedia* as an unending cycle is a manifestation of the understanding that the contradiction between these texts is real and intrinsic to their constitution.

PANDORA'S LIE

I have tried to show that the mechanism of contradiction is the *modus operandi* of *Ars* and *Remedia*. Contradiction, ambiguity, and incoherence are traditional signs of a woman's language. Hence, in creating the space of his text in a manner that deliberately embraces contradiction, Ovid is internalizing a conception of textuality that is intrinsically tied to an understanding of feminine subjectivity. But how exactly is contradiction tied to the nature of feminine experience and self-understanding? What is

the connection between the contradictory prisms that *Ars* and *Remedia* present to their readers and the structure of a feminine autobiography?

Let us begin to address these questions by recalling that one of the most important performative skills in the art of love is, according to Ovid, a competence in lying. For the mythical imagination, the underlying structure of the lie is the dichotomy between a person's inwardness and outward appearance, a dichotomy that is traditionally associated with femininity and found already in the Hesiodic image of the first woman. While it is interesting to notice that Hesiod's Pandora never actually lies, *Works and Days* construes her archetypal image as deceitful in essence. Reference to her deceitful character (*epiklopon ethos*) is made twice (*W&D* 67, 78), reinforced by mentioning the lies implanted in her by Hermes (*pseudea*, *W&D* 78). Beyond these specific attributions is a deeper structural sense that identifies the first woman with the origin of lies and deception. As suggested, Pandora, the first woman, is also the first human being—singular among the crowd of men—whose self is divided into an inside and an outside. The first woman is a creature who is not one with herself. And this duality between what shows itself and what remains invisible implies concealment and thus renders her, by definition, dishonest. In other words, what makes Pandora's image so troubling is not just the fact that she might be hiding specific contents from the eyes of men. It is the fact, rather, that she is, in principle, not transparent, that she has an inwardness that cannot be fully accessed.

Pandora introduces into the world the dichotomy between an inner nature and external appearance that foreshadows the distinction between soul and body. In this sense we find in the image of the first woman the seed for what would be articulated in the Western tradition as the general form of the human. Should we thus say that Pandora's disturbing effect has to do with the way she mirrors men, allowing them to recognize their own deceitful character and, consequently, their femininity? For Hesiod, Pandora is *kalon kakon*, expressing the discrepancy between a stunningly beautiful exteriority and an evil soul. Yet in what sense should the female soul be understood as evil? It would seem that Pandora's greatest problem is having a soul in the first place. She desires. She wants and craves warmth, food, home, sex, and children. These desires, had they been of a moderate order, would have been acceptable. Nevertheless, they are seen as dubious and morally suspicious precisely because they are invisible, because they threaten to remain concealed from the male beholder. Women, the daughters of Pandora's line, are accused of duplicity simply because their

beauty is the mark of the opaqueness of appearance, an externality that blocks direct insight into their psychology. The experience of looking at a woman is necessarily a devious one: nothing in her delicate appearance hints at her hidden wishes and needs. The feminine illusion of externality is particularly effective in the case of virgins. Consider Pandora, whose maidenhood transgresses the conventional Greek expectations for a pre-nuptial virgin. She is endowed with an independent mind despite the common presupposition that innocently beautiful virgins lack a will at all. Pandora's male beholders are shocked when they discover the vitality and autonomy of the virgin's soul. They feel threatened and deceived. Pandora's deceit is experienced each time the male beholder identifies the existence of interiority. Recognizing that a virgin hides a soul is an archetypal moment that extends far beyond Pandora, becoming part of the traditional image of the deceitful woman.

Once we are familiar with this imagery, it will perhaps not be surprising that Ovid ties the craftiness so crucial for practicing *his* art of love to femininity. In *Ars* and *Remedia* the figure of the *puella* not only functions as a unifying principle but, moreover, offers a core image for the enigmatic structure of the two love guides. While *Ars* initially construes the *puella* as charming, *Remedia* presents her as a dangerous illusion that men should shun. Whereas in *Ars* the *puella* enjoys the status of *domina*, encapsulating the peak of male desire, in *Remedia* she is deprived of her majestic stature. This double face is emblematic of the dual character of the Ovidian erotic text.

As a figure of love, the *puella* teaches her lovers the importance of the play between appearance and reality. Ovid, instructing his readers on how to respond to her, develops their awareness of the value of appearance and its utility in shaping reality. Such knowledge is necessary for both falling into and withdrawing from love. The readers of *Ars* 2.641–62 are thus advised to refrain from criticizing the girl's imperfections and to call them virtues, while the readers of *Remedia* 315–30 are advised to refrain from admiring the girl's virtues and, instead, to call them imperfections.

The perfection of the woman's appearance is the leitmotif of all three books of *Ars*. In Books 1 and 2 Ovid concentrates on developing a seductive language that would allow his male readers to celebrate the *puella*'s beauty. Book 3, which is addressed to women, focuses on the ways in which the female reader can control and refine her seductive appearance. In contrast, *Remedia* denounces feminine appearance and demagogically seeks to empty it of its erotic appeal. This reduction of the woman to her

appearance is, of course, typical of the misogynist tradition and is particularly characteristic of such didactic discourses against love as Book 4 of Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*.

Discussing the importance of oaths in the love relationship, Ovid encourages his male reader to swear in bad faith. His startlingly deviant advice is mitigated by the premise that no harm is done by cheating a cheater:

Ludite, si sapitis, solas impune puellas:
 hac magis est una fraude pudenda fides
 fallite fallentes: ex magna parte profanum
 sunt genus: in laqueos quos posuere, cadant.
 (AA 1.643–46)

[Take my advice: you may safely fool only girls:
 honesty should be more shameful than this single deceit.
 deceive the deceivers; they are mostly an impious genus.
 let them fall into the traps they have set themselves.]

Indeed, Ovid justifies his advice with the maxim that there is no fault in wronging the wrongdoers. What grounds this reasoning is the understanding that women are, by their nature, deceivers; they are the *profanum genus*. This should not be read as a misogynist slip. Ovid repeats himself more than once in his love guide. For example, when distinguishing between the two sexes, Ovid characterizes women as knowing how to conceal their desires—unlike men, who are bad imposters. Likewise, his exhortation to the male reader to “let women suffer from the same wound they are known to inflict” identifies women as the initiators of lying in an amorous relationship.

Ovid's use of this feminine stereotype is not, in my view, misogynist. For Ovid, who celebrates *eros* as intrinsic to human behavior, the feminine is a positive emblem that reflects his fascination with the erotic field. He has no reservations about the use of the “feminine lie”; for him, its contribution to erotic life is particularly important. Thus, he advises women to artfully lend their appearance a naive look.²⁷ While ascribing the role of seducer to men, women should occupy the position of the seduced and play the role of the inhibited party. This distribution of active and passive roles to the amorous subjects underscores the playful element that exists within the love relationship and points to its characteristic insincerity. But the question of inauthenticity becomes especially acute in the case of the

passive role that women are expected to play actively. Since the female partner must, by convention, appear to be shy, the naturalness of this presumably innate quality is ultimately lost. This also means that feminine modesty is, at its heart, false and inauthentic:

Vir prior accedat, vir verba precantia dicat:
 excipiat blandas comiter illa preces.
 ut potiare, roga: tantum cupit illa rogari;
 da causam voti principiumque tui.
 Iuppiter ad veteres supplex heroidas ibat;
 corrumpit magnum nulla puella Iovem.
 (AA 1.709–14)

[Let the man first approach, let him speak words of entreaty:
 her role is to listen gracefully to his flattering biddings.
 To win her, ask her: all she desires is to be asked;
 tell her the cause and the origin of your desire.
 Jupiter courted the old heroines as a suppliant;
 no woman raped mighty Jove.]

Ovid refers here to the manipulative quality of the innocent appearance of the seduced woman. Although she is disguised as a silent and different partner, the girl's passivity is interpreted in the context of the love game as concealing an opposite meaning. Her silence hides her desire. Her silence, moreover, incites and motivates the male's first approach. Ovid finds support for his case in mythology: in the stock of Jupiter's amorous affairs, all tales of sexual violence in which the god sates his desire for feminine victims, usually virgins. Mention of the rape of virgins is not irrelevant to the love instruction. Ovid includes violence as a requisite component of the seducer's repertoire. The logic, dangerously familiar to us from other contexts, is as follows:

Quis sapiens blandis non misceat oscula verbis?
 illa licet non det, non data sume tamen.
 pugnabit primo fortassis et "improbe" dicet;
 pugnando vinci se tamen illa volet . . .
 vim licet appelles: grata est vis ista puellis:
 quod iuvat, invitae saepe dedisse volunt.
 quaecumque est veneris subita violata rapina,

gaudet, et inprobitas muneris instar habet.
 at quae, cum posset cogi, non tacta recessit,
 ut simulet vultu gaudia, tristis erit.
 (AA 1.663–78)

[What wise man will not mix kisses with flattering words?
 Though she does not allow it, yet take what she does not give.
 Perhaps she will struggle at first and cry “you rascal”;
 yet she wishes to be overcome in the battle . . .
 Though you might call it violence: girls like this violence:
 often they love to refuse what it pleases them to grant.
 Happy is she who is violated unexpectedly by an amorous rape,
 and this assault she considers as a gift.
 And she who might have been harassed, but retreats untouched,
 might fake a happy face, while in fact she is sad.]

Girls, according to Ovid, enjoy being harassed. Following a long mythical tradition that equates love with violence, he proposes an argument fatal for women’s lives. His claim does not just concern feminine sexuality but also supports the traditional construction of women as liars. He explains their deceitful nature in terms of the ambiguity immanent to the feminine. The question that remained a mystery for Freud—“What does a woman want?”—points, according to Ovid, to the self-contradicting feminine persona.²⁸ His claim that “they love to refuse what it pleases them to grant” dismisses the veracity of female response. Although women suffer grievously from violent misinterpretations of their ambivalence, their ambiguity paradoxically constitutes the very existence of feminine subjectivity.

A GIRL’S RAPE AND THE BIRTH OF FEMININE SUBJECTIVITY

What does a woman want? One would be right to consider this question anachronistic in the ancient world. The Freudian inquiry addresses questions of subjectivity, self-identity, and self-consciousness that were all foreign to women in the ancient world. But while it might be difficult to determine what these psychological concepts meant for antiquity, we can nevertheless find cause for directing the same question to the male subject. What does the ancient man want? He wants, for example, glory (Agamemnon), or he wants recognition (Odysseus). But when we address this question to Helen or Penelope, no answer readily presents itself. Our perplexity grows when we attempt to decipher the hidden wishes of virgins

and newly wed women. Traditionally, women were not expected to desire anything beyond what was expected of them by their fathers and husbands.²⁹ The idealization of feminine silence reflects the general consensus that a good woman is a woman with no voice, and hence with no desires and aspirations.

One way of exploring the question of subjectivity in a girl's life would be in terms of the moment in which she acquires her voice. From the mythological point of view, the moment when a girl's voice is first heard constitutes the birth of her subjectivity. Where can we locate this mythical stage? Myth typically ties this foundational event to a woman's first erotic encounter. In the various myths concerning virgins, the crucial event that brings female identity to light is rape or, alternatively, marriage, which is often perceived as a sublimated form of rape. This tradition, resting primarily on the myth of Demeter and Persephone, connects the birth of the female voice to the act of rape, which is consequently considered to be a formative event in the life of every woman. In numerous myths involving virgins, rape has a double meaning, creating a tension between rape as a destructive event and as a formative one. On the one hand, it is viewed as a traumatic incident that cuts short the life of the virgin. On the other hand, it marks her emergence into the public sphere as a mature adult. In mythical accounts of the rape of virgins we thus find an analogy between the ambiguity of the feminine voice and the rape's dual meaning.³⁰

The girl's ambivalent relationship toward rape finds expression in the incredibility assigned to the girl's voice. The victim's voice is often interpreted as incoherent and unreliable, precisely because of her ambivalent response to the rape. As long as the question of the girl's desire remains open—does she resist the rape, does she consent to it as a necessary evil, or does she, as an ancient fallacy suggests, even welcome it?—a trustworthy female voice cannot be produced.³¹ Thus, the mythic biography of the virgin is inseparable from the myth of the feminine voice. Myth constructs the rape of virgins as the moment when the feminine voice is heard for the first time within the public (male) sphere. Paradoxically, then, the rape is responsible for releasing the female from her psychological and social constraints. She speaks out, she screams, she cries. But this fragmentary sense of freedom does not produce a monolithic voice. It is, rather, an unreliable voice that contradicts itself and is hiding a dim, concealed, pent-up desire.

When viewing the myth of Demeter and Persephone as the paradigm of feminine biography, we cannot help seeing that rape is perceived as a

necessary stage in the maturation of a woman. The *Homeric Hymn* divides the life of Persephone into two parts—before her abduction into the underworld and immediately afterward. The hymn's poet marks this division through the symbol of the virgin's name. In the first stage of her life, she is referred to by the nonspecific terms *kore* and *pais* ("maiden, daughter"); after her abduction she is released from this anonymity. For the first time the poet gives her a name: Persephone. According to the hymn's poetic logic, the abduction and rape justify the naming of the victim. They turn the previously anonymous figure into a named persona. In this sense, the *Hymn to Demeter* presents the rape of Persephone as the event that makes possible the formation of her independent identity.³²

The *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* opens with a description of Persephone's abduction that recalls in many aspects other mythological stories of rape and abduction, such as those of Daphne, Io, Europa, and the daughters of Danaos and Pyche. In these accounts the term "virgin" applies to young women approaching the age for marriage. The world of the virgins, often identified with the life of the nymphs, is described as closed off and threatened by the approaching requirement to marry, which is usually fulfilled through a brutal act of abduction and rape.³³

Io, a maiden, was raped by Zeus while wandering in the woods. Europa was abducted by Zeus disguised as a bull while she played with her virgin friends in the meadow. According to Ovid, the wild nymph Daphne strenuously objected to marriage, for she wished to retain her virginity and devote herself to Diana, the virgin goddess of the hunt:

Saepe pater dixit: "generum mihi, filia, debes,"
 saepe pater dixit: "debes mihi, nata, nepotes";
 illa velut crimen taedas exosa iugales
 pulchra verecundo suffuderat ora rubore
 inque patris blandis haerens cervice lacertis
 "da mihi perpetua, genitor carissime," dixit
 "Virginitate frui! dedit hoc pater ante Dianae."
 (Ovid, *Met.* 1.481–87)

[Often her father said: "daughter you owe me a son-in-law,"
 often her father said: "give me grandsons, my child."
 But she, hating the matrimonial torch as if it were a crime,
 covered her beautiful face with blushing redness.
 And clinging on her father's neck with persuading arms,

she said: "Grant me, my dearest father, the joy of eternal virginity! Grant me what Diana's father has already granted her."]

A virgin's resistance to marriage stems not only from her revulsion against men, who are perceived as an alien, threatening force. It is also the result of her desire to preserve a life of unrestrained freedom. To live in the forest as a nymph among the other nymphs means not to be enslaved to a man and his desires but to live an uninhibited life, outside the cultural order represented by marriage. A girl's desire to stay close to her mother, to cling to her virginity, or to play with her friends the nymphs can easily be interpreted as a threat to the culture, or as a disruption of the social order. The ideology of marriage was, among other things, aimed at satisfying the need to restrain the voices of women, which were likely to express desires incompatible with the existing order.³⁴

The ancient medical attitude toward hysteria, as expressed in the essay "On Virgins" from the Hippocratic corpus (dated to the fourth century BCE), identifies the condition with the unique physiological status of the virgin. The essay's author claims that a virgin's uterus (*hystera* in Greek) accumulates blood, the root of the hysteria common to virgins. This condition is described as a form of insanity. Describing how dangerous the girl is to herself, the writer alludes to his own fear that the virgin's psychic powers will grow in the absence of male supervision:

ὁκόταν δὲ πληρωθῶσι ταῦτα τὰ μέρεα, καὶ φρίκη ξὺν πυρετῷ ἀνααῖσσει· πλανήτας τοὺς πυρετοὺς καλεοῦσιν. ἔχόντων δὲ τουτέων ὧδε, ὑπὸ δὲ τῆς ὀξυφλεγμοσῆς μαίνεται, ὑπὸ δὲ τῆς σηπεδόνης φονῆς, ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦ ζοφεροῦ φοβέεται καὶ δέδοικεν, ὑπὸ δὲ τῆς περὶ τὴν καρδίην πιέξιος ἀγχόνας κραίνουσιν, ὑπὸ δὲ τῆς κακίης τοῦ ἄματος ἀλύων καὶ ἀδημονέων ὁ θυμὸς κακὸν ἐφέλκεται· ἕτερον δὲ καὶ φοβερὰ ὀνομάζει· καὶ κελεύουσιν ἄλλεσθαι καὶ καταπίπτειν ἐς τὰ φρέατα καὶ ἄγχεσθαι, ἅτε ἀμείνονά τε ἔοντα καὶ χρεῖην ἔχοντα παντοίην· ὁκοτε δὲ ἄνευ φαντασμάτων, ἡδονὴ τις, ἀφ' ἧς ἐρᾷ τοῦ θανάτου ὥσπερ τινος ἀγαθοῦ.

(Hippocrates, *Virg.* 7.474–80)

[When these organs are full, shivering and fever set in. These fevers are called erratic. In this state the woman has a fit caused by the acute inflammation; she has murderous desires brought on by the putrid condition of her internal organs, fears and terrors when she sees shadows, and the pressure around

her heart makes her feel that she wants to strangle herself. Her mind, which is confused and distressed because her blood has become corrupt, becomes in its turn deranged. The patient says terrible things. She has visions which tell her that it would be better or would serve some purpose to jump, to throw herself into a well, or to strangle herself. If she does not have visions, she feels a certain pleasure at the thought of death, which appears to her as something desirable.—Trans. Aline Rouselle]³⁵

The cure for this destructive situation is clear to the writer. “I would advise young girls who suffer in this way to be married as soon as possible; indeed, if they become pregnant they are cured.”³⁶ Medical opinion thus also considered the loss of virginity a necessary stage in a woman’s maturation, leading to a profound and decisive change in her development as a wife and a mother. Yet, as is evident, this change in a young girl’s life is a way of silencing passions and desires that are perceived to be dangerous and violent. There is no explicit reference in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* to the power embodied in Persephone’s untamed virginal life. However, the fact that the marriage to Hades, her uncle-bridegroom, was arranged by Persephone’s father, Zeus, reveals how the marriage preserves the patriarchal order, thus reinforcing the status of both Zeus and Hades. From the feminine point of view, the situation is complex. The daughter’s rape in the *Hymn to Demeter* is accorded not only the metonymic meaning of marriage, but that of death as well. The image of Persephone’s “marriage” to Hades, god of the underworld, finds considerable resonance in accounts of anxieties about marriage among virgins in Greek and Roman myths. The daughters of Danaos, for example, refuse to marry their designated husbands, preferring death to the deathbed of matrimony:

ἄφυκτος δ' οὐκέτ' ἂν πέλοιτο κήρ.
 κελαινόχρως δὲ πάλλεταί μου καρδία.
 πατρὸς σκοπαὶ δέ μ' εἶλον· οἴχομαι φόβῳ.
 θέλωμι δ' ἂν μορσίμου
 βρόχου τυχεῖν ἐν ἄρτάναις,
 πρὶν ἄνδρ' ἀπευκτὸν τῷδε χριμφθῆναι χροί.
 πρόπαρ θανούσας δ' Ἀίδας ἀνάσσοι.
 (Aeschylus, *Supp.* 784–91)

[No flight
 no time to hide

inhuman cruelty leaves no escape
 my heart beats darker
 dashes like a small trapped creature
 a father's eye snares me, fear haunts me

let my bondage to doom
 end in a slip noose
 before a man
 I wish unborn
 can touch my flesh, O come
 husband me, Death.—Trans. Janet Lembke]³⁷

The identification of marriage with death prevents the daughters of Danaos from discovering the additional meaning attached to the loss of virginity—the passage into a new stage of life. The function of rape as generator of an essential change in the virgin's life is given a visual manifestation in numerous accounts of bodily changes, or metamorphoses, since this is how the rupturing of the hymen is seen. Thus, for example, Io pays for her rape with a metamorphosis: she is transformed into a cow. Raped by Zeus, she undergoes a change, the essence of which was losing her virginity and becoming pregnant, which can be seen as a (temporary) metamorphosis. In the mythological story, she loses her human form as well. Io's story externalizes the breaking of the hymen by having her assume the form of a domestic animal. In Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*, Io's story takes an autobiographical form as she relates it to Prometheus. The fateful turning point in her life is expressed in a major transformation. The silent, retiring girl has now become the narrator of her life story:

οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως ὑμῖν ἀπιστήσαί με χρή,
 σαφεῖ δὲ μύθῳ πᾶν ὅπερ προσχρήζετε
 πεύσεσθε· καίτοι καὶ λέγους' αἰσχύνομαι
 θεόσσυτον χειμῶνα καὶ διαφθορὰν
 μορφῆς, ὅθεν μοι σχετλίᾳ προσέπτατο.
 αἰεὶ γὰρ ὄψεις ἔννυχοι πωλεύμεναι
 ἐς παρθενῶνας τοὺς ἔμοῦς παρηγόρου
 λείοισι μύθοις “ὦ μέγ' εὐδαιμον κόρη,
 τί παρθελεύει δαρὸν, ἐξὸν σοι γάμου
 τυχεῖν μεγίστου; Ζεὺς γὰρ ἡμέρου βέλει
 πρὸς σοῦ τέθαλπται καὶ συναίρεσθαι Κύπριν

θέλει· σὺ δ', ὦ παῖ, μὴ 'πολακτίσης λέχος
 τὸ Ζηνός, ἀλλ' ἔξελθε πρὸς Λέρνης βαθὺν
 λειμῶνα, ποίμνας βουστάσεις τε πρὸς πατρός,
 ὥς ἂν τὸ Δῖον ὄμμα λωφήσῃ πόθου.”

(Aeschylus, *Pr.* 940–67)

[I don't see how I can r efuse you.
 I'll tell you
 all you want to know.
 although, even as I speak
 I'm ashamed, recalling
 the storm the God let loos e
 my lovely body
 ruined—
 and the one who drove it w inging down
 on me, wretched thing.]

Always at night, haunting soft-spoken dreams
 would wander into my bedroom
 (where no man ha d ever entered)
 whispering whispering
 “Happy, happy girl
 you could marry the greatest One of all
 why wait so long
 untouched?
 Desire's spear has ma de Zeus
 burn for you. He wants to come
 together with you
 making love.
 Don't, dear child, turn skittish
 against the bed of Zeus. Go out
 into the deep g rasses of Lerna, where your father's
 cattle and sheep
 browse. Go,
 so the eye of Zeus will no longer
 be heavy lidded with longing.”—Trans. James Scully an d C.J. Herington]³⁸

Io does n ot wish to submit t o Zeus, but she knows that to do so w ill be advantageous for her (a psychological reading would regard Io's visions as the repressed expression of an erotic wish). Io's compensation for Zeus's

sexual conquest is union with the supreme god, or, in other words, her transformation into the mother of Zeus's descendants. But before she is able to enjoy her new role as a mother, she must take the first step in separating from her virginal world, a step expressed in her willingness—though, paradoxically, a step taken against her will—to become the object of Zeus's lustful gaze. Rape in these stories serves as a bridge to a woman's psychic development, since it leads the sexually ignorant, inexperienced girl to new insights about herself.

The virgin's new awareness is the result of her separation from her mother, as depicted in the ancient tradition's nuptial poems. The young woman does not wish to part from her mother and her sheltered world. Her wedding is usually forced upon her, as is the first night of love.³⁹ Ancient nuptial poems by Sappho, Catullus, and others reveal that the ceremonies included an element of abduction.⁴⁰ And despite the fact that both mother and daughter resent the latter's abduction, the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* also reveals a hidden consent to the act on the daughter's part. This brings about the mother's reconciliation with a deed that cannot be undone. Persephone's consent to the act of rape is related to the process of individuation she experiences after her separation from her mother.⁴¹ In the myth of Demeter and Persephone, the young woman becomes a subject; for the first time she is accorded an identity distinct from her mother's. This happens only after she herself understands and accepts her place in the world as an object of men's desire (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 5–18). This archetypal moment in which the virgin steps out into the public domain takes place at a relatively late stage in her life, with her first menstruation. Mythical thinking, in contrast to psychoanalytic theory, does not begin by constructing a woman's psychic development from infancy. The virgin's biography begins only when she goes out to play with her friends—that is, with the first separation between girl and mother.

The feminine psyche does not, in fact, exist prior to this stage. The fragility of the girl's being can be observed in one of Sappho's nuptial poems:

οἶον τὸ γλυκύμαλον ἐρεύθεται ἄκρῳ ἐπ' ὕδαρ,
 ἄκρον ἐπ' ἀκροτάτῳ, λελάθοντο δὲ μαλοδρόπης·
 οὐ μὲν ἐκλελάθοντ', ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐδύναντ' ἐπίκεσθαι.
 (Sappho 105a)

[As the sweet-apple reddens on the bough-top,
 on the top of the topmost bough; the apple-gatherers have forgotten it —

no they have not forgotten it entirely, but they could not reach it.—Trans. David A. Campbell]⁴²

The apple, an obvious erotic symbol of mature femininity, represents the virginal feminine psyche, rounded, full, and immersed in the final stages of its maturation—not red, but reddening. Similarly, the girl has not yet been chosen by her suitors; she is also forgotten on the tree. Such forgetting is part of the traditional perception of the developing feminine psyche. As long as the girl has not developed an awareness of herself being seen in the world, as long as she has yet to learn how to externalize herself, she does not exist in the consciousness of men. In fact, she does not exist at all as a subject with distinct emotions and a will of her own. The young woman is transformed into a person with a will and a voice only after she enters the public arena, where she recognizes her place as a beautiful and desirable object. This happens, in other words, at the moment when she experiences Pandora's syndrome: her inward-outward structure.

The girl's development of a will is thus perceived to be the result of her exposure to and emergence as an object of masculine passion. The apple-pickers overlook the apple because the embryonic feminine psyche has yet to acquire the ability to be seen. The virginal psyche is hidden from view, and so it is beyond the grasp of the apple-pickers. The intermediate stage—in which the psyche matures and is then picked off the topmost bough of the tree and brought down to earth—finds expression in the virgins' naive play in the fields or meadows (as in the myths of Persephone, Io, and Europa). This play conceals knowledge and erotic curiosity as they exist in an initial, obscure state. By the logic of the myth, the girl is aware, even if only vaguely, of the possibility of rape. This awareness makes it possible to portray her as being drawn to the rape and accepting it while, at the same time, resisting it.

On a symbolic level, rape motivates the feminine biography as it fractures the girl's sheltered life, integrating the male perspective into it. A twilight zone of virginal awareness is the result. During her abduction Persephone cries out, and her voice is heard by her mother. We can say that she explicitly resists the act: ἀρπάζας δ' ἄέκουσαν ἐπὶ χρυσεόοισιν ὄχοισιν ἥγ' ὀλοφυρομένην ("He snatched the unwilling maid into his golden chariot and led her off lamenting," in Helene Foley's translation; *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 19–20). This is, in fact, the first time in the mythical story that the voice of Demeter's daughter is heard. That voice, the sound of the girl's cry during her rape and abduction, is what tragically concretizes the

new feminine consciousness. It signifies the birth of the woman out of the virginal body. It is a voice with performative momentum, a voice that declares, "I am here," and so signifies the emergence of a new feminine identity into the world. The voice of the rape victim externalizes her new self-awareness. Her cry is testimony to a new awareness of her visibility, and thereby an announcement of her symbolic birth. This is a crucial moment when the girl expresses her will for the first time in public. But this is an enigmatic will, with two levels of meaning: one open and obvious, the other hidden and obscure. This feminine will is an intermingled expression of the conscious and unconscious. Persephone's cry belongs to the entangled meaning of the hated rape-marriage, which initiates her process of individuation, marking her separation from her mother and crowning her as the underworld's new queen. As such, it paradoxically implicates Persephone's willingness to be raped.

Such a possibility is indeed suggested in Persephone's speech to her mother. This oration comes at the zenith of Persephone's process of maturation and acquisition of independence, presenting as it does the former virgin in her new guise as a narrator who has control over her voice. Following the rape, she can put her subjective experience into words. She is also able to describe her experience from a personal perspective informed by her own interests. She becomes a narrator conscious of herself and of her needs—what is traditionally perceived to be a manipulative narrator.⁴³ A critical reading of the myth of Demeter cannot ignore the positive use that the poet makes of rape. As in the case of Aeschylus's *Io*, the young girl uses her voice for the first time as a consequence of the rape. She is called by her name in public and is granted an identity separate from her mother's.⁴⁴ Her voice consequently conveys a strange, contradictory experience: the experience that destroys her as a virgin is the one that revives her as a woman.

This self-contradiction constitutes feminine subjectivity. Persephone's paradox is created by the clash of two conflicting identities: the virginal and the sexual, or the inhibited and the uninhibited. These two feminine identities remain vital and active, although they formally pertain to two distinct temporal stages: the present and future (from the virgin's perspective) or the past and present (from the woman's perspective). Girls, then, experience their sexual innocence as already tinted by anticipation of its destruction. And sexually mature women experience the vitality of their virginal consciousness as one of invisibility and voicelessness. Persephone, for example, wants to retain her innocent virginal nature as she tells her

mother that she has been raped and then forced to remain a third of each year in the underworld. But her wish to retain a modest appearance before her mother is already a sign of the loss of that very innocence. Once she needs to appear innocent, she is no longer the virgin she was. Under the gaze of the Other, the virgin is transformed into a sexual and, accordingly, a deceiving woman.⁴⁵ Feminine experience is thus destined to be an unceasing clash between two dimensions of being.

This tension within the feminine has a strong textual significance. In the context of Ovid, it finds its expression in the way *Ars* and *Remedia* open up a reading experience that is cyclical and unending. In addition to the structure of contradiction, circularity is another feminine aspect of the Ovidian love guides. His circular love narrative reenacts the myth of Persephone, embracing its aura of feminine temporality. In echoing nature's rhythm, Ovid's narrative revives the myth of the seasons.

Ovid's version of the myth of Proserpina in *Metamorphoses* allows us to underscore this point. He creates an archetypal feminine biography by focusing on Proserpina's divided self. Her dual nature rests on her mood swings and on the symbolic interplay of life and death, marriage and maidenhood, and darkness and light:

Nunc dea, regnorum numen commune duorum,
cum matre est totidem, totidem cum coniuge menses.
vertitur extemplo facies et mentis et oris;
nam modo quae poterat Diti quoque maesta videri,
laeta deae frons est, ut sol, qui tectus aquosis
nubibus ante fuit, victis e nubibus exit.
(*Met.* 5.566–71)

[Now the goddess, the common divinity of the two domains,
spends half the months with her mother, and the other half with her husband.
Her mental and physical countenance alternates successively:
for she who only recently seemed sad even to Dis
has now a happy appearance, like the sun, which once was covered
behind watery clouds, and now is out after the clouds have been dispersed.]

In perpetual oscillation between two opposing modes of being, Proserpina's biography is a suitable candidate for the Ovidian love narrative.⁴⁶ The possibility of embracing the alternating conditions of the death and the growth of love in a ceaseless cycle is a corollary of the feminine condition in general.

Pandora's Tears

The personal is like an old scar that, for the external viewer, is no more than a fact among facts, yet one that, in the hands of the old maid Euryclea, pulsates as the very root of recognition: isn't this you, Odysseus? The personal is the hidden face of language.

—HAGI KENAN, *The Present Personal*

FEMININE WEAVING: TEXT, TEXTILE, BODY, PAIN

Pandora is a work of art, molded by the divine hands of the god of artianship, Hephaestus. She is a handmade figure. Pandora, the first work of art, signals the origin of art, and the origin of art as *techné*. However, she is more than an objet d'art serving as a model for the act of craftsmanship. She is herself a gifted artisan. As a seducer, she knows the art of love. As a rhetorician, she masters language. And finally, since "Athena taught her needlework and the weaving of the varied web," Pandora is a weaver, skilled in the art of creating textiles (*W&D* 64). What is the relationship between Pandora's art, her weaving, and her femininity? How is the image of the female weaver related to the ancient notion of a text? And how does this image contribute to the formation of a text's *feminine sense*?

Textum originally meant something woven, a fabric or a textile. And although it was only at a later stage that the term came to denote a text,¹ the images of textile, a woven object and the act of weaving were commonly used in reference to the workings of language and the composition of texts. In *Cratylus* 388, for example, Socrates uses the metaphor of weaving in criticizing the view that linguistic signs are completely arbitrary, making the point that a proper language use, instead of being a matter of convention, must depend on language's intricate underpinnings in reality. Language (and in particular the act of naming) is "not relative to ourselves." And like the craft of weaving, the application of language to the world must be done "according to a natural process, and with a proper instrument." Hence, while it is clear to us that what "has to be woven or pierced

has to be woven or pierced with something," it should analogously be understood that there is an intrinsic correspondence between language and the phenomena to which it refers.² For Socrates the metaphor of weaving can fruitfully guide our understanding of linguistic action, since it exemplifies well the correlation and interdependence of act, instrument, and woven material, corresponding to the act of naming, the name itself and the name's reference in the world.

The origin of the weaving metaphor is much older, of course, and can be traced back to Homer. In Homer, there is no thematic articulation of the relationship between text and textile.³ Yet, again and again, these two forms of art—the making of texts and of textiles—are intertwined (in the *Odyssey*, for example) in the image of women who accompany their weaving with a song.⁴ In other words, the intimate relationship between weaving and textuality is regulated by a feminine image: the singing weaver.

One of the most remarkable singing weavers in the *Odyssey* is Calypso who accompanies her weaving with a voice of unique beauty (*Od.* 5.61–63). Her seductive appearance casts such a strong spell on her beholders that even the wise Odysseus falls captive. Submerged in a deep forgetfulness, Odysseus turns his back on his duties as lord, husband, and father, for which he is in no way reproached by the Homeric narrator. On the contrary, the Homeric depiction of Calypso is so marvelous that it facilitates the reader's empathy toward Odysseus and his submission to his hostess. Calypso has become a well-known prototype of feminine seduction. Yet it is important to notice that her seductive powers are first operative precisely between the visible art of weaving and the invisible web of her song. That is, the description of her powers echoes a predominant understanding of poetry's effect, also illustrated by the divine effect of the Muses in Hesiod's *Theogony*.⁵ Furthermore, Calypso's image as a weaver not only reflects the effects of poetry but, more specifically, illuminates the intimate connection between femininity, textuality, and corporeality. Calypso's song implies the presence of her voice, and her voice, in turn, cannot be imagined without the actuality of her body. Analogously, I suggest that we should understand Calypso's weaving as the production of a text(ile) whose center of gravity is the concreteness of the feminine body.

I shall soon return to the question of the relationship of text and body, but let us first tie this metaphor to our discussion of Ovid in the previous chapter. The imagery of weaving is not just central to his understanding of poetry;⁶ it is specifically operative at the place where he addresses the contradictory construction of *Ars* and *Remedia*: *Nec nova praeteritum Musa*

retexit opus ("This new Muse does not unravel [unweave] my past work," *Rem.* 12).⁷ Completely aware of the complex structure that binds his works, Ovid assures his readers that *Remedia* does not consist in a decomposition of *Ars*. Unlike Penelope's cunning undoing of her work, Ovid's *Remedia* is not an act of unweaving. Should it therefore be understood as a continued weaving of *Ars*? The double meaning of the term *retexo* complicates Ovid's gesture. What is the relationship between the act of unweaving and the act of weaving again? Leaving this question open, it is sufficient for our purpose to recognize that, for Ovid, what ties together the texts of *Ars* and *Remedia* is, metaphorically, the working of the warp and woof.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the connection between textile and text becomes more explicit and turns in to a significant theme. Books 4–6 present collections of feminine stories that are either told by weaving women or through the very medium of weaving. The typical feminine activity of weaving creates a community of storytellers and listeners. Particularly noteworthy in this context are the tales of two famous weavers, Arachne (*Met.* 6.1–145) and Philomela (*Met.* 6.412–674), whose textiles are reflective of the character of Ovid's own textuality.

Mirroring the Ovidian text in which she appears, Arachne is a weaver who creates subversive and provocative tales in which the phenomenon of metamorphosis is central: virgins changed into women, mothers of divine children. Furthermore, Arachne's depiction of the gods (like Ovid's) emphasizes their sensual, violent, and immoral aspects: her gods are womanizers who brutally violate virgins. Her sentiments are far from respectful toward religious authority and tend toward the sensational and the blasphemous. And, finally, Arachne's confrontation with the rule of Minerva and her punishment by the sovereign suggest a feminine reflection of Ovid's own biography.⁸

The image of Philomela functions in a different manner, allowing Ovid to render explicit another important dimension of his poetics.⁹ Unlike Arachne's, Philomela's weaving has no concern for the cosmological or divine order. It is strictly autobiographical, consisting of a horrific story of rape and mutilation. Philomela is a victim. She weaves the story of her misfortune with crimson threads on white—the symbolism is clear. From her place of confinement, she secretly sends her tapestry to her sister, her only hope. Her weaving is a message from one woman to another. As she cannot write, her weaving consists of visual images that are nevertheless read (*legere*) by her sister. Adverting to the visual is, of course, not an

aesthetic decision but a way to compensate for illiteracy and in Philomela's case also a way of overcoming the loss of her human voice. Because the possibility of an immediate vocal articulation is no longer open to her, weaving becomes a medium of self-expression and a communication. In this respect, we may say that her weaving takes place in a sphere of intermediacy: in weaving she allows meaning to unfold between the spoken and the written, between the natural and the conventional, between the sensitivity of the tongue and the external rule of an objective language. How does Philomela's story reflect Ovid's relationship to his own poetry?

Philomela's weaving is not only the mark of an individual silenced by the force of the sovereign, not only a sign of transgression against the sovereign's authority, but also, and perhaps first of all, a form of representation suffused with a hidden, subliminal pain. That is, Philomela's cloth is the imprint of a permanent mark of pain that is clearly not trivial in the context of Ovid's ostensible mannerism. In this respect, Philomela's weaving reflects another important feminine aspect of the Ovidian text. Weaving implies here a distinctive relationship between author and text. The "woven" text is not merely a textual object created by the mind of its author; rather, it is a text that must be understood within the horizon of its author's body, the movement of the body, and its pain. Another way to put this is to say that Pandora's weaving is an image of the embodied text: a kind of textuality in which meaning is riveted to its materiality, resonating with the corporal presence of its author.

Philomela's weaving is inseparable from her crying. The fabric of her text is soaked with the tears that have become the mark of the feminine presence of the corporeal within the textual. The presence of tears is the invisible trace of a movement by a body that has stained the text with a dimension of opacity that cannot be integrated into the general semantics of the text. Hence, when Ovid's Phaedra, for example, writes to Hippolytus, she makes it clear that her text cannot be understood only in terms of what it says:

addimus his precibus lacrimas quoque; verba precantis
 qui legis, et lacrimas finge videre meas.
 (*Her.* 4.175–76)

[These prayers I seal with tears. When all is said
 And done, and you from end to end have read
 This letter, think what tears its author shed.—Trans. Daryl Hine]¹⁰

Phaedra's text is made of a fabric that, in its materiality, testifies to—bears traces of—a dimension of signification that escapes any general or abstract understanding.¹¹ Instead, it calls for a reading that situates the text within the horizons of the pain of a particular writer.¹²

In this chapter I wish to explore yet another aspect of the feminine character of the ancient text by juxtaposing feminine tears and feminine weaving, a mourner's tears and a weaver's tearful fabric. Employing terms developed in previous chapters, I wish to suggest that the image of Pandora as a weaver intrinsically ties femininity to the very idea of a text. If the woven textile is an image of a text, then it is, first and foremost, an image of a feminine text. In other words, weaving should not be understood merely as a representation of a marginalized subcategory of feminine texts. Rather, the feminine is constitutive of the possibility of textual fabrication. The feminine is responsible for the text's capacity to appear before us as flesh and blood, to breathe and shed tears and speak to us. The feminine gives the text a body; the feminine is the memory of this giving, of the very hands that wove the text, of a text's author. The feminine dimension of the text is never disinterested; it never takes the form of neutral representation. Instead, it is ever soaked in the tears of its maker and is intended to absorb the tears of its beholder.¹³

HELEN'S WEB

As we proceed to unravel the significance that the image of feminine weaving carries for the making of a text, it is perhaps important that we distinguish between two kinds of weaving and, in corollary fashion, between two archetypal kinds of women weavers. Our primary concern is the form of weaving that is analogous to a text's form because of its ability to represent, tell stories, and evoke images. However, we should remember that alongside the "textual textile" there is a common practice of weaving that lacks representational qualities.¹⁴ This kind of nonrepresentational weaving, devoid of a figurative dimension, is typically associated with the feminine figure of the "home-dwelling" weaver.¹⁵ "Here lies Amymone wife of Marcus," we read in a first-century BCE Roman epitaph (*ILS* 8402.L), "best and most beautiful worker in wool, pious, chaste, thrifty, faithful, a stayer-at-home."¹⁶ Sitting alone in front of her loom with spindle and distaff, segregated from the public field of vision, this typical weaver has become the quintessential symbol of female chastity—faithful, obedient, diligent, submissive, and ultimately silent.

In contrast to the figure of the nonrepresentational weaver, the “aura” of the mimetic weaver should be understood in terms of her fulfilled need for self-expression, her autonomy and ability to resist institutional authority. Mimetic weaving is, in this sense, a feminine form of transgressive art whose singularity I shall try to unpack now by considering the figure and act of the first representational weaver to be depicted in the *Iliad*: Helen of Troy.¹⁷

In her chamber, Helen is weaving, while outside the war is raging. For the Homeric narrator, Helen's weaving is clearly not a central event, and yet the very fact of its mentioning is significant and should not be taken for granted. In her weaving, Helen, like the Homeric narrator, addresses the struggles of Trojans and Achaeans. Yet whereas the poetic source of the Homeric epic is explicitly divine, Helen seems riveted to the domain of the human. In her representation of the war, she neither responds to the Muses nor serves as a vehicle for the transmission of any absolute or external truth. Helen has no access to a global perspective on the events of the war, and what she depicts stems from her private point of view.

Hence, in depicting Helen depicting the war, the Homeric narrator has allowed for an antithetical perspective to announce its presence within the text of the *Iliad*. That is, a place is made within the *Iliad* for a perspective on the war that poses an alternative to the Homeric account. This perspective is feminine; it is expressed in a visual language;¹⁸ and since it is rooted in a personal form of experience, it never becomes part of the *Iliad*'s public sphere. In other words, the presence of Helen's woven representation is created by a double gesture that renders the appearance of that representation dependent on the condition that it be relegated to the very margins of public conspicuity. Helen's representation is not allowed to echo beyond the bounds of the domestic domain. No unique place is made for her expressive or artistic act, and the product of that act, the woven textile itself, is ultimately regarded as a private object whose specific contents remain unknown to either protagonists or readers of the *Iliad*. What is the meaning and function of Helen's weaving? Is it simply a conventional feminine mode of whiling away the time? Should we understand her weaving as a therapeutic activity, connected perhaps to her own ambivalence regarding the war, to an understanding of her past betrayal? Can Helen's weaving be considered as an attempt at personal testimony? Homer does not provide us with any clues on these points. The essence of Helen's weaving remains obscure, and that obscurity has been interpreted in the context of the traditional marginalization of the feminine from the field

of art. Does Helen's lost perspective on the war signify the exclusion of the feminine voice from the ethical field of canonical literature?¹⁹

The Homeric description of Helen's weaving is indeed very limited, and yet it seems to me that it succeeds, despite its brevity, in capturing an important dimension of Helen's manner of representation. We read:

τὴν δ' εὖρ' ἐν μεγάρω· ἥ δὲ μέγαν ἴστον ὕφαινε
δίπλακα πορφυρέην, πολέας δ' ἐνέπασσεν ἀέθλους
Τρώων θ' ἰπποδάμων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων,
οὓς ἔθεν εἶνεκ' ἔπασχον ὑπ' Ἄρηος παλαμάων·
(*Il.* 3.125–28)

[She came on Helen in the chamber; she was weaving a great web,
a red folding robe, and working into it the numerous struggles
of Trojans, breakers of horses, and bronze-armoured Achaeans,
struggles that they endured for her sake at the hands of the war god.—
Trans. Richmond Lattimore]²⁰

Indeed, we can hardly infer anything specific from the description of Helen's "great web." We can neither deduce the identity of the figures depicted nor construe any particular event or situation in which they are involved. The only particular feature of Helen's depiction of the war that calls for our attention is the fact that her perspective on the war is completely personal. Her weaving does not involve any objective representation of a given state of affairs; it is a representation of a war whose meaning, for her, is thoroughly autobiographical. It seems that the Homeric narrator is sensitive to Helen's personal involvement in the web she creates: the war she depicts cannot be understood as the general story about the "struggles of Trojans, breakers of horses, and bronze-armoured Achaeans." Instead, it is her own story that she is engaged in depicting—the story of the "struggles that they [Trojans and Achaeans] endured for *her sake*."²¹ Helen's weaving articulates the external state of things—the events in the world of men—while positing her own self as the (invisible) center of gravity, the focal point, of the world she depicts. In this respect, Helen's presence in the *Iliad* is subversive, as it calls in to question the absolute hegemony of the text's metaphysical origin, its emanation from the sacred rapport between poet and Muses. Her weaving marks, in other words, the presence of a hermetic dimension that also belongs to the text and that can easily pass unnoticed precisely because it appears as the text's texture—its handmade quality.

Helen's woven textile is an early antecedent of the autobiographical text. However, this is not the only kind of text that ties her to the history of autobiographical writing. In the *Iliad*, she is associated with the creation of yet another kind of text that belongs to the same tradition—her lament for Hector.²²

Lamentation is a kind of speech act that traditionally offers women a unique opportunity for self-presentation and self-expression within the public domain, the domain of men.²³ In the *Iliad*, in particular, the conventions of lamentation both enable and regulate the appearance of the feminine voice in public.²⁴ It has been shown that the Homeric representations of mourning women typically allow for the elaboration of their specific personal circumstances and emotional responses.²⁵

What is the character of Helen's lament over the dead Hector? In the final book of the *Iliad* we read:

Ἕκτορ ἐμῷ θυμῷ δαέρων πολὺ φίλτατε πάντων,
 ἥ μὲν μοι πόσις ἐστὶν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδής,
 ὅς μ' ἄγαγε Τροίηνδ' ὥς πρὶν ὠφελλον ὀλέσθαι.
 ἤδη γὰρ νῦν μοι τόδε εἰκοστὸν ἔτος ἐστὶν
 ἐξ οὗ κείμεν ἔβην καὶ ἐμῆς ἀπελήλυθα πάτρης·
 ἀλλ' οὐ πω σεῦ ἄκουσα κακὸν ἔπος οὐδ' ἀσύφλητον·
 ἀλλ' εἴ τίς με καὶ ἄλλος ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἐνίπτοι
 δαέρων ἢ γαλόων ἢ εἰνατέρων εὐπέπλων,
 ἢ ἑκυρή—ἑκυρὸς δὲ πατὴρ ὥς ἦπιος αἰεΐ—,
 ἀλλὰ σὺ τὸν ἐπέεσσι παραιφάμενος κατέρυκες,
 σῆ τ' ἀγανοφροσύνη καὶ σοῖς ἀγανοῖς ἐπέεσσι.
 τὼ σέ θ' ἅμα κλαίω καὶ ἔμ' ἄμμορον ἀχνυμένη κῆρ·
 οὐ γάρ* τίς μοι ἔτ' ἄλλος ἐνὶ Τροίῃ εὐρείῃ
 ἦπιος οὐδὲ φίλος, πάντες δέ με πεφρίκασιν.
 (24.763–75)

[Hektor, of all my lord's brothers dearest by far to my spirit:
 my husband is Alexandros, like an immortal, who brought me
 here to Troy; and I should have died before I came with him;
 and here now is the twentieth year upon me since I came
 from the place where I was, forsaking the land of my fathers. In this time
 I have never heard a harsh saying from you, nor an insult.
 No, but when another, one of my lord's brothers or sisters, a fair-robed
 wife of some brother, would say a harsh word to me in the palace,

or my lord's mother—but his father was gentle always, a father indeed—then you would speak and put them off and restrain them by your own gentleness of heart and your gentle words. Therefore I mourn for you in sorrow of heart and mourn myself also and my ill luck. There was no other in all the wide Troad who was kind to me, and my friend; all others shrank when they saw me.]

For whom does Helen weep? Does she weep for Hector, the intended reference of her text, or is her weeping reflexive, turning back onto her own forsaken life? Both, I believe—Helen mourns for herself in mourning Hector. Or, in other words, she mourns “her” Hector. For Helen, losing Hector means losing her sole friend and protector, the only guardian she ever had in Troy. In confronting his death, she is lamenting her own miserable fate. Her address to the dead Hector is a form of self-disclosure. Thus, she replaces the internal addressee of her speech, “dear Hector,” with a self-referential turn, “I should have died.”²⁶ Hector is Helen's mirror image. His death is a reminder of her own fragility and of the presence of death in her life.

In a manner that is similar to her representation, in weaving, of the war, Helen's language of lament does not seek to capture the objective condition of Hector's death. She is concerned neither with his painful absence—the only pain she can acknowledge is her own—nor with the effect of his death on his intimate and general surroundings, his family and the city of Troy. Instead, she speaks within horizons that are suffused with her own presence. Her shadow is cast over the domain of her speech. When she looks at the dead Hector, she sees herself. In this respect, Helen exemplifies what is perhaps less conspicuous in her representation of numerous other lamenting women in the *Iliad*. Her address to the dead is a channel for expressing her own grief,²⁷ for giving voice to an absence that typically cannot register within the public order of men's language. Lamentation creates an aperture in the order of discourse. It allows women to address the world at the moment of a loss of world: to communicate meanings that belong to the world, while knowing that this world will never be theirs. In other words, lamentation is an event of meaning in which the feminine reveals its constant presence in the language of men through the disclosure of irresolvable tensions that are always inherent in the act of language: the public and the private, the general and the utterly singular, the abstract and the concrete, the historical or cosmological and the autobiographical.

The examples of weaving and lamenting are meant to illuminate the unique manner in which a feminine text is tied to its author. Unlike predominant conceptions of textuality that privilege texts whose meaning is ultimately severed from and independent of the living breath of their author, a feminine text is one in which the bodily, painful, idiosyncratic presence of an author is integral to what a text communicates. This corporeal, opaque kind of presence may often seem untraceable in a text, yet this is just because its invisibility is similar to the invisible presence of an author's tears that, with time, have dried in between her written lines. Consequently, we may say that the uniqueness of the relationship between a feminine text and its author lies in its radical singularity. In other words, the feminine dimension of a text (which as should be clear by now is part of any text as such) implies that texts bear the presence of their authors in a concrete manner. This is not to suggest, however, that a text is necessarily reflective of the facts of its author's biography or that our reading should direct itself to any specific biographical layer of the text. On the contrary, I have suggested that the feminine dimension of a text resonates in the very impossibility of resolving certain constitutive tensions of the text. And I have particularly emphasized the manner in which a text's meaning cannot free itself of its author's body.

But, here, it seems we have arrived at the question of reading. That is, how does the feminine dimension of the text—how does Pandora—show itself to a potential reader? Does the feminine call for a specific kind of readership? We have seen that death, absence, loss of world, and mourning provide the horizons within which the feminine voice traditionally reaches out for the possibility of articulation and expressivity. These same horizons—the horizons of lamentation—are also the site of a particular form of reading, a feminine form of listening.

LISTENING LIKE A WOMAN: PENELOPE'S TEARS

In *Odyssey* 1.32, Phemius performs before the crowd of suitors in the palace of Odysseus his song about the Achaeans' bitter homecoming from Troy. Whereas the assembled men drink in his words in silence, there are two other responses to the bard's song.²⁸ These belong to Penelope, who overhears the singing from her upper chambers, and Telemachos, who sits among the suitors. Mother and son respond in their own ways, and the Homeric poet emphasizes the opposition between these two poetical positions by placing them in distinct locations within the palace. These locations are descriptive of the difference between the two kinds of listening,

a difference between private and public, hidden and open, intimate and distant, and, finally, feminine and masculine. The public place of listening, the atrium, is where the male audience is gathered and expects to hear a new song. The public location reflects male expectations of the bard. The male audience is fascinated with the factual content of the song, with its informative quality. They are attentive to the capacity of the song to bring news from afar.

In contrast to the public space, the hidden quarters of the women constitute the spatial symbol of domestic intimacy. This feminine space is reflective of the way women listen to poetry. The feminine response is deaf to the song's collective significance; its interest in the information contained in the song is restricted to the personal meaning it might have for the listener. Penelope, sensitive to the personal implications of this song about the Achaeans' homecoming, is deeply affected by it. She consequently appears in the hall in tears and asks the singer to "leave off singing this sad / song, which always afflicts the dear heart deep inside me" (*Od.* 1.340–41). We should remember that the song does not include the story of Odysseus's homecoming. She weeps because the description of the suffering Danaans reminds her of her husband and intensifies her longing for him. Though it is not directly concerned with Odysseus, she identifies the shadow of her missing husband in the song. But Penelope's personal mode of listening does not meet with Telemachos's approval:

σοί δ' ἐπιτολμάτω κραδίη καὶ θυμὸς ἀκούειν·
οὐ γὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς οἷος ἀπώλεσε νόστιμον ἦμαρ
ἐν Τροίῃ, πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι φῶτες ὄλοντο.
(*Od.* 1.353–55)

[So let your heart and let your spirit be hardened to listen.
Odysseus is not the only one who lost his homecoming
day at Troy. There were many others who perished, besides him.]

Telemachos aspires to listen to poetry as a man—namely, with an ear attuned to the collective human experience. His mode of listening blurs the distinction between his personal grief over his father's absence and his general concern for the miserable fate of the rest of the Greek leaders and armies. In this mode of listening, the listener's desire for self-recognition and emotional identification is unimportant; the poem's supposedly objective meaning is supreme. How should we understand Penelope's personal

perspective? Does its uniqueness lie in the fact that it involves an emotional response to the depicted events? Is the feminine character of the Homeric epic tantamount to the text's emotional dimension (implying a readership based on emotional identification)?

The question of the emotional aspect of the epic and its relationship to forms of empathetic reading is clearly not new. Charles Segal, for example, discusses the issue in the context of the Homeric representation of listeners and their patterns of response, which, in his view, testify to the Homeric preoccupation with the conditions for creating an involved audience. According to Segal, the Homeric treatment of the phenomenon of stirring emotions in a community of listeners should be read as a background for the emergence of Athenian drama with its unique patterns of audience response:

There is a direct line between this function of song as a celebration of human solidarity in the face of suffering and the development of Attic drama, which in so many other respects owes much to Homer. Drama, among other things, creates the community of the theater as a community of shared grief and compassion.²⁹

Furthermore, Segal argues that the abundance of Homeric story-telling scenes—scenes that often involve a description of emotional responses to stories and poetry—enables the epic to construct a model for its ideal reader: one who is capable of compassion and human solidarity.³⁰

The crucial role of compassion and solidarity is indeed incontestable in this context. Yet it should not be conflated with the meaning event that concerns us here, represented by Penelope and the feminine response that she epitomizes. More specifically, we need to distinguish between the kind of compassion and solidarity of which Segal speaks and the personal rapport with a text that I understand as feminine. Whereas compassion and solidarity arise within the horizons of our shared universal forms of experience, I am more interested in the idiosyncratic dimension of experience as it echoes, for example, in Penelope. For Segal, texts, performances, and events may often elicit emotional responses. Yet in their ability to create solidarity, they necessarily express general forms of human concern and call upon their listeners to participate in a “sharing” of these forms.

The feminine trope functions in a different manner, however. It is not directed at solidarity but circumvents the general form of the human voice. The feminine embodies a meeting point, a face-to-face encounter where

contact is made between the reader as an individual and a specific fictional figure. In other words, the feminine dimension of the text is what opens up to the emotional condition of a specific reader; it directs itself to the reader's psychological experience and makes a place for her (or his) biography to resonate. The feminine dimension of the text consists of an invitation to search for the reflection of the reader's own experience in the represented subject. The feminine provides the text with a capacity to touch, and a feminine reading is thus one that allows itself to be touched.

ODYSSEUS WEEPS LIKE A WOMAN

In exploring the option of a feminine mode of listening within the Homeric epic, it may be generally instructive to view the *Odyssey* as consisting, in itself, of a reading—and, more specifically, a reading response—to the masculine ethos of the *Iliad*.³¹ Doing so, we see that regardless of its traditionally pejorative status, the feminine sense is, in fact, integral to this representative work of canonical literature, the heroic epic.³² Despite the valorization of masculine ideals, Homeric poetry recognizes the necessity of a feminine poetical position. This becomes clear in the famous description of Odysseus weeping in response to the heroic song of the bard in Alkinoos's palace.

At the end of his journey, Odysseus reaches the land of the Phaeacians. Destitute, hopeless, exhausted, naked, and hungry, he is nearing his final destination. For ten years he had fought the war in Troy and for ten more years he wandered along a tortuous route in the attempt to return home. Now, having reached the Phaeacians, who will eventually bring him to Ithaka, Odysseus is entertained by the performance of Demodocus, the local bard, who sings of the Trojan War and specifically of Odysseus's own heroic feats. Demodocus presents Odysseus as a divine hero, likening him to the god Ares, the ultimate personification of masculinity. Odysseus listens to the bard's words incognito. His identity is concealed: he can only hear of the man he was, but cannot openly be the man he is. And yet this scene presents a significant shift from Odysseus the hero of the past to Odysseus the man of the present. The shift occurs as Odysseus the listener takes the place of Odysseus the hero—that is, as the Homeric narrator focuses on his response to the heroic poetry of Demodocus:

ἦειδεν δ' ὥς ἄστυ διέπραθον υἱὲς Ἀχαιῶν
 ἵπποθεν ἐκχύμενοι, κῶλον λόχον ἐκπρολιπόντες.
 ἄλλον δ' ἄλλη ἄειδε πόλιν κεραϊζόμεν αἰπὴν,

αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσῆα προτὶ δώματα Διηφόβοιο
 βήμεναι, ἥūt' Ἴῆρηα σὺν ἀντιθέῳ Μενελάῳ.
 κείθι δὲ αἰνότατον πόλεμον φάτο τολμήσαντα
 νικῆσαι καὶ ἔπειτα διὰ μεγάθυμον Ἀθήνην.
 ταῦτ' ἄρ' αἰοδὸς ἄειδε περικλυτός· αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
 τήκετο, δάκρυ δ' ἔδευεν ὑπὸ βλεφάροισι παρειάς.
 ὥς δὲ γυνὴ κλαίῃσι φίλον πόσιν ἀμφιπεσοῦσα,
 ὅς τε εἷς πρόσθεν πόλιος λαῶν τε πέσῃσιν,
 ἄστει καὶ τεκέεσσιν ἀμύνων νηλεὲς ἡμαρ·
 ἦ μὲν τὸν θνήσκοντα καὶ ἀσπαίροντα ἰδοῦσα
 ἀμφ' αὐτῷ χυμένη λίγα κωκυέι· οἳ δέ τ' ὅπισθε
 κόπτοντες δούρεσσι μετὰφρενον ἡδὲ καὶ ὤμους
 εἴρερον εἰσανάγουσι, πόνον τ' ἐχέμεν καὶ οἰζύν·
 τῆς δ' ἐλεεινοτάτῳ ἄχρει φθινύθουσι παρειαί·
 ὥς Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐλεεινὸν ὑπ' ὀφρύσι δάκρυον εἶβεν.
 (*Od.* 8.514–31)

[He sang then how the sons of the Achaians left their hollow
 hiding place and streamed from the horse and sacked the city,
 and he sang how one and another fought through the steep citadel,
 and how in particular Odysseus went, with godlike
 Menelaos, like Ares, to find the house of Deiphobos,
 and there, he said, he endured the grimmest fighting that ever
 he had, but won it there too, with great-hearted Athene aiding.

So the famous singer sang his tale, but Odysseus
 melted, and from under his eyes the tears ran down, drenching
 his cheeks. As a woman weeps, lying over the body
 of her great husband, who fell fighting for her city and people
 as he tried to beat off the pitiless day from city and children;
 she sees him dying and gasping for breath, and winding her body
 about him she cries high and shrill, while the men behind her,
 hitting her with their spear butts on the back and the shoulders,
 force her up and lead her away into slavery, to have
 hard work and sorrow, and her cheeks are wracked with pitiful weeping.
 Such were the pitiful tears Odysseus shed from under
 his brows, but they went unnoticed by all the others.]

Odysseus's response is utterly private and remains altogether concealed. His response is nonverbal, and furthermore it is unintentional. He is affected

by the words he hears. Yet these words do not become a part of a space of mental articulation. Their effect is registered, rather, at the level of the body: Odysseus weeps; he weeps like a woman.

In Homeric poetry both men and women cry. Indeed, Homeric poetry is replete with loud weeping, spontaneous cries of anguish, and elaborate funeral orations delivered by men and women alike. Nevertheless, the analogy made between Odysseus's tears and the tears of a woman is remarkable. Readers of the *Odyssey* have consistently wondered about the significance of this simile. Why is Odysseus, the virile hero, described here in terms of a woman lamenting over her dead husband?³³ The fact that this Homeric analogy is clearly not meant to diminish the protagonist's masculinity makes the question even more pressing. In the context of Homeric poetry, this is not a trivial rhetorical gesture.³⁴

The analogy to a weeping woman marks, as is often observed, a turning point in the Homeric narrative. It functions as a trope that sets the stage for the dramatic climax of the hero's self-recognition. Indeed, making a connection made between Odysseus and the feminine opens up a whole psychological landscape that will be crucial for his homecoming. Yet the feminine figures here in yet another way: it is reflective, in my view, of the Homeric sensitivity toward the kinds of reading responses that the epic itself elicits and, in particular, to the possibility of a feminine reading experience.³⁵

Odysseus's representation as a woman is unsettling. This effect is magnified by the specificity of the analogy: Odysseus is not compared to any ordinary lamenting woman, but to a Trojan captive mourning her dead husband. This simile calls attention to itself, as an interruption that the reader of the *Odyssey* must come to terms with, as a tension that must be resolved. This feminine simile calls for a reading that could bridge the gap between the glory and superiority of Odysseus the Greek hero and his image as a radical Other, a woman, a Trojan whose battle is lost. The meaning of "the weeping woman" unfolds as a call to the reader to find a perspective from which the hero can be understood as a female victim of the war.³⁶

It is precisely this conciliatory reading that is evoked by the feminine. The feminine is not merely "another aspect" of Odysseus's character. Rather, it is a dimension of immanent difference without which self-identity and alterity could not be mediated. The feminine is a mediating force operative in reconciling the dichotomies central to Odysseus's life, tensions that are, furthermore, central to any encounter with a text. The feminine

is thus presented here as a form of experience that enables Odysseus to bridge the gap between his past and his future, between action and passivity, between the glorious hero of the Trojan war and the fugitive and survivor who finds himself at the mercy of his Phaeacian hosts. The feminine, in this context, is the intertwining of proximity and distance from home. It is a force that cancels the strict opposition between home and the horrors of war. And finally, the feminine links, for Odysseus, interiority with exteriority, the hidden with the publicly manifest—opening the possibility of self-revelation.³⁷

Putting this in a metapoetical perspective, we may say that the feminine not only functions as an interface between Odysseus the actor and Odysseus the spectator but furthermore serves as the principle of movement between listening and narrating. In the Homeric poem, it is precisely the feminine weeping of Odysseus that marks the shift from a third- to a first-person narrative. The feminine allows the transformation of Demodocus's song in to an autobiographical narrative in Books 9–12.³⁸ Consequently, we may understand the Homeric image of the lamenting woman as a prism that makes itself available, beyond Odysseus, to the reader of the *Odyssey*. The image of the lamenting woman evokes the possibility of a reading that, as we have seen, embraces the text by projecting into it one's own personal experience and by opening oneself up to its affective dimension. In this sense, this homecoming epic can certainly be read as a reflection on and a retrospective reading of the *Iliad*. Odysseus's response to the song of the Phaeacian bard demonstrates this literary function, as the scene provides embedded instructions for how to listen to poetry: crying is the mark of a listener who has the capacity to be personally affected by it.

XANTHIPPE'S TEARS

Homer was the first authority to make the connection between a personal response to poetry and the feminine. This connection rests on the analogy between the response to poetry and the response of a female mourner to the death of a beloved person. As we have seen, however, for the Homeric narrator, the appearance of the feminine voice is always shrouded with ambivalence. In other words, the Homeric gesture that inscribes for the feminine voice an autonomous place is also the one that ultimately contests the legitimacy of the feminine as a bearer of genuine poetic value. The history of Western thought is replete with this kind of ambivalence toward the feminine and its ability to participate in and contribute to the field of

meaning. Ambivalence toward the feminine is a response whose structure ultimately reproduces the very trait that the feminine is so often charged with: ambivalence. (And it is often ambivalence, rather than a clear and explicit opposition, that harbors the seed of misogyny.)

It is particularly interesting in this context to see how in criticizing Homer for his indecisiveness toward the (feminine) nature of the lamenting voice, Plato reproduces that same ambivalence. Plato's criticism is the one leading to an internalization of the Homeric duality. In Plato's *Republic*, the theme of feminine lamentation and its poetic representation surfaces in the context of a discussion of the status of poetry in relation to the educational character of the ideal *polis*. For Plato, the mimetic essence of poetry implies an ontological inferiority that becomes even more problematic because of the actual dangers that the structure of mimesis—and thus of identification—carries for the healthy soul. Without venturing to enter here into the intricacies of that “ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry,” we should notice that Plato's reflections on the representation of lamentation are motivated by a prescriptive attitude toward specific mimetic acts of poetry that might corrupt the souls of citizen readers.

In focusing on the epic, Plato's Socrates argues that heroes must be represented only if they can serve as proper models for the city's youth. For Socrates, the other side of this argument is articulated as a call for removing from Homeric poetry all passages that seem to promote a false perception of death and the underworld. This would be, according to Socrates, the proper way to instill courage and a fighting spirit in a citizenry that is destined to be free and self-governing. Hence, as he criticizes Homer for his failure to determine clear ethical and educational standards for his readers, Socrates subsequently demands that episodes of lamentation so typical of Homer's heroes be censored. Achilles, for example, should not be allowed to cry.

ταῦτα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα πάντα παραιτησόμεθα “Ὀμηρόν τε καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιητὰς μὴ χαλεπαίνειν ἂν διαγράψωμεν, οὐχ ὥς οὐ ποιητικὰ καὶ ἡδέα τοῖς πολλοῖς ἀκούειν, ἀλλ’ ὅσῳ ποιητικώτερα, τοσούτω ἦττον ἀκουστέον παισὶ καὶ ἀνδράσιν οὓς δεῖ ἐλευθέρους εἶναι, δουλείαν θανάτου μᾶλλον πεφοβημένους.

(*Rep.* 3.387b)

[We will beg Homer and the other poets not to be angry if we cancel those and all similar passages, not that they are not poetic and pleasing to most

hearers, but because the more poetic they are the less are they suited to the ears of boys and men who are destined to be free and to be more afraid of slavery than of death.—Trans. Paul Shorey.]³⁹

Plato is preoccupied with the management of emotions and the possibility of disciplining and controlling one's irrational impulses, instincts, and desires. Yet he does not argue that these lower appetites must be excluded completely from the field of poetic representations. On the contrary, poetry, for Plato, must properly apportion pain and emotional expression in order to realize the delicate balance between the emotions and the ability to restrain them. According to him, readers of poetry may thus be exposed to instances of emotional expression on the condition that these instances are clearly associated with inferior and minor figures and concomitantly accompanied by other figures who are exemplary protagonists manifesting self-control.

Furthermore, while Plato endorses censorship of emotional representations, he does not entirely purge lamentations from the literary text. Plato is willing to admit certain scenes of lament, but he does so, again, only on the condition that they are associated with unworthy characters, among them women: Ὁρθῶς ἄρ' ἀν' ἐξαιροῖμεν τοὺς θρήνους τῶν ὀνομαστῶν ἀνδρῶν, γυναῖξι δὲ ἀποδιδόμεν. ("Then we should be right in doing away with the lamentations of men of note and in attributing them to women," *Rep.* 3.387e). Platonic censorship of emotional representation may thus be said to consist of a shift in the inner structure of the poetical field. Instead of eliminating emotions altogether, Plato is concerned with shifting the intensity of emotions from the center to the very margins of epic poetry. The literary agent that allows him to bring about such a shift is the figure of the woman: she can be represented in lamentation since her lament does not genuinely upset the emotional balance of listeners.

This dual role ascribed to the feminine voice of lamentation—to the feminine as a necessary figure of difference and alterity—continues to be operative in attitudes such as the one we find, for example, in Plutarch. In a letter to a grieving friend, Plutarch elaborates a masculine ideal of self-composure that he explicitly contrasts with the exaggerated emotionality more typical of human mourning.⁴⁰ In this context, Plutarch shows specific interest in the peculiarities of Lycian custom: "The law giver of the Lycians orders his citizens, whenever they mourned, to clothe themselves first in women's garments and then to mourn, wishing to make it clear that mourning is womanish and unbecoming to decorous men who lay claim

to the education of the free born.” For Plutarch Lycian practice reflects the true nature of excessive emotions:

θῆλυ γὰρ ὄντως καὶ ἀσθενὲς καὶ ἀγεννὲς τὸ πενθεῖν· γυναῖκες γὰρ ἀνδρῶν εἰσι φιλοπενθέστεραι καὶ οἱ βάρβαροι τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ οἱ χείρους ἄνδρες τῶν ἀμεινόνων.

(Plutarch, *Letter to Apollonius* 113.22)

[Yes, mourning is verily feminine, and weak, and ignoble, since women are more given to it than men, and barbarians more than Greeks, and inferior men more than better men. —Trans. Frank Cole Babbitt]⁴¹

Plutarch sees the feminine as a marker for the soul's lower faculties. This somewhat odd anecdote about Lycian mourning customs merely reaffirms his own understanding of the nature of women. What Plutarch seems less prone to admit is that legislating mourning in female disguise means that the feminine not only functions as a way of releasing the Lycian men from their pain; it becomes the model for the exposure of masculine emotionality. Despite the exclusion of the feminine from the core of men's world, the Lycians seem to be dependent on it in order to face and experience one of the most crucial dimensions of that world—death. In this respect, Plutarch's anecdote contains more than it admits. Plutarch regards the Lycian custom as a demonstration of women's inferior public stature, but doesn't seem to recognize that his anecdote exemplifies a public sphere that, in fact, functions under the sign of the feminine.

Whereas for Plutarch the dialectical relationship between masculine and feminine seems to pass unnoticed, the Platonic text displays its awareness of this dialectics, turning it in to one of the most distinctive marks of the Socratic dialogue. Here, Plato's *Phaedo*, with its strong emotional impact, provides a good case in point. “I was there, Echerates,”⁴² says Phaedo, opening the dialogue named after him (*Phd.* 57a). He was there “with Socrates on the day he drank the poison in the prison,” and he is intent on telling “everything from the beginning” (59c). This beginning, the dialogue's first dramatic scene, consists of the arrival of Socrates' friends and disciples at his prison cell. “On entering,” they find “Socrates just freed from his chains, and Xanthippe . . . sitting beside him . . . holding his baby son” (60a). The dialogue ends with the dramatic scene of Socrates drinking the poison, his friends weeping, Socrates' last words, his death, “the end of our friend, the first man . . . of all whom we came to know in his generation; the wisest too, and the most righteous” (118a).

What unfolds between *Phaedo*'s beginning and end, between the image of Socrates' baby son (birth) and the image of his own dying, is, as is usual for Plato, a conversation. Emotionally *Phaedo* is clearly one of Plato's most moving works, but the dialogue's philosophical content seems to point in the opposite direction. The core of the conversation is dedicated to the immortality of the soul, the liberation of the soul from the body, the philosopher's commitment to that liberation, and finally an explication of Socrates' tranquility, perhaps even joy, in the face of death. In these intimate and sorrowful moments, Socrates engages his disciples in a discussion that is meant to explain the sense in which, for the true philosopher, life is a training for death and death the place in which the soul can finally celebrate its freedom from the burdens of the body. *Phaedo* focuses on the immortal nature of the soul and the philosophical possibility of emancipation from the world of appearance, but it is just as much a dialogue about mourning. Indeed, it presents an exemplary form of mourning.

In this context it is particularly important to notice that the feminine explicitly figures here in two ways. We have already mentioned Xanthippe, who is present in the company of Socrates and friends. But before discussing her actual role in the dialogue, let us turn first to another feminine figure whose function is more metaphorical. As Socrates elaborates on the philosophical task of delivering the soul from its bodily prison, he alludes in passing to the figure of Penelope.

ἀλλ' οὕτω λογίσαιτ' ἂν ψυχὴ ἀνδρὸς φιλοσόφου, καὶ οὐκ ἂν οἰηθεῖη τὴν μὲν φιλοσοφίαν χρῆναι αὐτὴν λύειν, λυούσης δὲ ἐκείνης, αὐτὴν παραδιδόναι ταῖς ἡδοναῖς καὶ λύπαις ἑαυτὴν πάλιν αὐτῇ ἐγκαταδεῖν καὶ ἀνήνυτον ἔργον πράττειν Πηνελόπης τινὰ ἐναντίως ἰστὸν μεταχειριζομένης, ἀλλὰ γαλήνην τούτων παρασκευάζουσα, ἐπομένη τῷ λογισμῷ καὶ ἀεὶ ἐν τούτῳ οὔσα, τὸ ἀληθὲς καὶ τὸ θεῖον καὶ τὸ ἀδόξαστον θεωμένη καὶ ὑπ' ἐκείνου τρεφομένη.

(*Phd.* 84a)

[The soul of a philosopher will reflect as we have said, and will not suppose that, while it is the task of philosophy to secure its release, it should thwart that task by surrendering itself to pleasures and pain, and so relapse in to its old imprisonment, like Penelope at the interminable task of undoing her web; rather will it abate the storm of desire by taking reason as its guide and constant companion, by contemplating the utter certainty of divine reality and finding sustenance therein.]

Penelope serves Socrates as a negative example. The philosopher and Penelope share an important similarity: for both the act of untying is crucial. But this is where the resemblance ends. In the course of a lifetime, the philosopher practices a gradual release of the soul from the body. His training takes the form of a continual untying that will reach true fruition with the death of the body. Yet, according to Socrates, one of the clear dangers to a philosopher's progress is slipping back into the world of the body, relapsing into the world of "pleasures and pain." This is what Penelope seems to signify, at least structurally, as the one who weaves again what she has unwoven. For the philosopher it is important not to renew those ties with the corporeal world that, with effort, have been unknotted. The true philosopher is presented in opposition to Penelope, who is engaged in an action that constantly cancels its own effects. The philosopher must exhibit determination in taking a consistently linear path in one direction.

This Platonic image of Penelope is central to Adriana Cavarero's *In Spite of Plato: A Feminist Rewriting of Ancient Philosophy*. For Cavarero, Plato's evocation of Penelope is a clear misuse of the feminine figure. Penelope, just like the figures of Diotima or the Thracian maidservant, is an example of the manner in which "feminine figures [are] stolen from their contexts."⁴³ Examining the presuppositions underlying Plato's allusion to Penelope, Cavarero argues against the manner in which Plato violently, and uncritically, disvalues a whole ethics of the self that Penelope and, more generally, the feminine stand for. According to Cavarero, Plato's use of the figure of Penelope is based on a wholesale misconstruction of the feminine at the center of which lies "a semantic displacement of the concept of life."⁴⁴ This misconstruction allows Plato to operate within, and take completely for granted, a field of conceptual oppositions that are hierarchically ordered in correlation with the gender opposition. In this conceptual field, the figure of the woman is the systematic marker for inferior metaphysical categories. Penelope's existence, in particular, is identified with the "hesitations of the imperfect philosopher." Yet, as Cavarero shows, the figure of Penelope can do philosophical work for Plato only because he has completely inverted the significance of her tale. "The scandal is not that Penelope undoes what she has done, but that she reweaves what she has already unwoven."⁴⁵

Cavarero's analysis illuminates the Platonic oppositions by showing how these binarisms are dependent on the devaluation of the feminine. Yet, should we, in the first place, understand Plato's conceptual oppositions to

be dichotomous, as Cavarero claims? I have tried to show that this is not the case. Whereas the spiritual, for example, is articulated in contrast to the corporeal, there is no way to imagine or understand the spiritual independently of the sentient body. The spiritual and the corporeal (just like the rational and the emotional) are not simply two mutually exclusive domains but dimensions of human reality that are dialectically related. I think it is clear that Plato does not believe in the possibility of a radical transcendence of the body. Not even the philosopher can fully leave his body behind. The philosopher too must ultimately return to the Platonic cave, thus forsaking the possibility of a constant and direct view of the sun (the form of the good). The world whose center is the body—the world of appearance, of the senses, emotions, temporality, and perspective—cannot be wholly negated because it is an intrinsic, albeit problematic, dimension of who we are as humans. And thus, the form of the philosophical emancipation of the soul from the body is a dialectical sublimation that may, at best, bracket the dominion of the body while retaining its presence in the form of the negative. Does Plato believe that there is a real option of living a philosophical life that does not include constant relapses into the domain of “pleasures and pain”? Can the living philosopher commit himself only to a practice of untying, or is he ineluctably forced—by the fact of having a body—into moments of weaving what he has labored to unweave? In other words, is Plato’s image of Penelope weaving and unweaving really opposed to the image of the true philosopher?

A similar dialectics is characteristic, in my view, of Plato’s presentation of Xanthippe, the wife of Socrates. Xanthippe is the feminine counterpart of Socrates, his dialectical opposite. As the dialogue begins, she is already there, in the prison, sitting with her baby beside Socrates. At first sight, her role seems very limited, consisting of a few words, said aloud, that immediately single her out as a person *non grata*. Present at the meeting between Socrates and his friends, Xanthippe is described as crying out and saying “the sort of thing that women always say.” What she says is: “Socrates, this is the last time your dear friends will speak to you and you to them” (*Phd.* 60a). She is clearly empathetic, sensing the anguish of separation and the pain of an approaching loss, and she seems to understand the singularity of this last gathering of friends. Yet the manner in which she expresses herself does not resonate well with the Socratic ear. Xanthippe speaks, but her saying remains unanswered, as if it were an incomprehensible series of noises. For Socrates, Xanthippe’s saying does not seem to carry any *logos* that deserves a response. His only way of acknowledging

that he has heard her is to turn to a friend: "Crito," he says, "someone had better take her home." Xanthippe leaves the room "sobbing and lamenting" (60a).

Why isn't Xanthippe's speech allowed into the space of dialogue so important for the Socratic ethos? In what sense does her saying belong to "the sort of thing that women always say"? How does her speech differ from the speech of men? Does it differ from the language of men? And, finally, why is Xanthippe excluded from the last gathering of Socrates and friends?

Xanthippe's words carry an air of sentimentality that irritates—that seems too loud—for the manly bonding of philosophers. Perhaps it is her insistence on the finality of the philosophical dialogue, her acceptance of the finitude of the human conversation, that attracts the hostility of the philosopher who believes in the eternal journey of the soul and the after-life of words. How should we understand her role in this scene?

Xanthippe is a figure whose exclusion marks the opening act of the dialogue. It is only when she leaves "sobbing and lamenting" that an exploration of true—philosophical—mourning can begin. Her exclusion is not an arbitrary turn in the Platonic narrative, but rather a literary gesture that carries symbolic value. But what exactly is the value of that exclusion? Should we understand Xanthippe as a feminine image of the antiphilosophical that, as such, must be excluded as a condition for a philosophical beginning? Is she merely a negative example for Plato? This is how Cavarero, for example, seems to read her figure: Xanthippe serves Plato in demarcating the place of the "bad philosopher" who operates within a picture of the world that is essentially feminine. "For Xanthippe," she writes, "Socrates simply dies: he is no more. She knows nothing of the split between soul and body, and simply stays within the experience of her individual life where mind and body are joined indissolubly together."⁴⁶

Indeed, Xanthippe's sole utterance in the dialogue seems focused on the "here and now" without any acknowledgment of a possible horizon of transcendence. But is she simply an example of a feminine worldview, a language, a kind of speech that the true philosopher should avoid? If Xanthippe's perspective is uneducational, why doesn't Plato follow his own advice in *Republic* and free his text from her feminine presence in the first place?

We may begin answering these questions by recalling that exclusion is a common strategy in Plato.⁴⁷ More specifically, we may want to recall that the beginning of the philosophical conversation on love in *Symposium* 176e

is also marked by the exclusion of a feminine figure: the female flute-player. The flute-player expresses herself in a manner that does not convey a *logos*. Her music communicates only through tonality and rhythm, and this sensual senselessness seems improper within the space of genuine philosophical dialogue. However, while the flute-player's presence seems to denote an unwanted sensual effect, her exclusion does not diminish the sensuality of the dialogue. On the contrary, her departure only accentuates this sensual aspect of the male discourse on love. And, indeed, it is Alcibiades' arrival that serves as the occasion for the flute girl's return.

In a similar manner, although Xanthippe is made to leave the scene of philosophy, the affect she embodies continues to be central to *Phaedo*. Furthermore, the fact that she has been excluded only underscores the inevitability of the emotional spectrum—as well as the corporeal point of view—that she embodies. Once she takes her leave, the dialogue is supposedly free to develop its own course in a properly manly manner. But this does not happen. Instead of keeping a clear and safe distance from Xanthippe's example, *Phaedo* develops through a continual tension between the emotional and the rational. And as the dialogue proceeds, we see that a clear choice has not been made between the need to follow the Socratic imperative of self-composure and the need to weep over Socrates, to mourn the loss of a singular person and a beloved friend. This tension between the tormenting pain of loss and the ideal of self-possession (at the level of the dialogue's participants), between the strength of rational argumentation and the effect of literary description (at the level of readers), is explicitly accentuated in the dialogue's ending scene.

Phaedo and his friends had "more or less contrived to hold back [their] tears," but as they see Socrates "put the cup to his lips," it "became impossible" (*Phd.* 117c). As Phaedo describes himself weeping, his language clearly voices that reflexive structure which we have earlier identified as typical of feminine lamentation. "For myself, despite my efforts the tears were pouring down my cheeks, so that I had to cover my face; but I was weeping not for him, but for my own misfortunes in losing such a friend" (*Phd.* 117c). Phaedo is not the only one who cries in this scene. "Crito had got up and withdrawn already, finding that he could not restrain his tears; as for Apollodorus, he had even before this been weeping continuously, and in this last moment he burst into sobs, and his tears of distress were heartbreaking to all of us." It is only at Socrates' explicit request that Phaedo and his friends put an end to their crying:

οἷα, ἔφη, ποιεῖτε, ὧς θαυμάσιοι. ἐγὼ μέντοι οὐχ ἥκιστα τούτου ἕνεκα
τὰς γυναικας ἀπέπεμψα, ἵνα μὴ τοιαῦτα πλημμελοῖεν· καὶ γὰρ ἀκήκοα
ὅτι ἐν εὐφημίᾳ χρὴ τελευτᾶν. ἀλλ' ἡσυχίαν τε ἄγετε καὶ καρτερεῖτε.
(*Phd.* 117d)

[My dear good people, what a way to behave! Why, it was chiefly to avoid
such a lapse that I sent the women away; for I was always told that a man
ought to die in peace and quiet. Come, calm yourselves and do not give way.]

Socrates' *logos* is effective. The crying stops. Yet his explicit request to stop the crying, just like the need to exclude Xanthippe, is a manifestation of a fundamental dimension of human experience that is always already there and that cannot be forced out of the space of reason. This is precisely why the figure of women resurfaces here, and Xanthippe returns. "It was chiefly to avoid such a lapse that I sent the women away," Socrates explains. But his explanation seems to work against itself, since it only underscores the constant reverberation of the feminine in the dialogue.

Socrates puts an end to crying. His gaze functions as a mirror for his disciples, opening a course of reflective transformation. Seeing Socrates see them, seeing themselves in his eyes, his disciples embrace the imperative of overcoming the lower powers of the agitated soul. The immediate impact of the Socratic gaze is—as reported also by Alcibiades in the *Symposium*—shame: καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀκούσαντες ἡσχύνημέν τε καὶ ἐπέσχομεν τοῦ δακρύνειν. ("We felt ashamed and ceased to weep," *Phd.* 117e). The momentary silence may well testify to the manner in which Phaedo and friends have internalized Socrates' ethical demand. At the same time, however, we should also notice that the silence imposed on Socrates' friends carries a distinctive literary effect. A literary device is needed to achieve the closure of the dialogue in a mesmerizing serenity, following Socrates' process of dying. For the dialogue's participants the end of weeping may imply the possibility of overcoming their emotions; for the reader, it demonstrates the impossibility of releasing the literary text from its emotional underpinnings.

The absence of the feminine nevertheless leaves an irremovable imprint of pain in the text. The tragedy of losing Socrates has a physicality that is registered in the body. Well aware of this feminine dimension, Plato makes a place for it in the tears his text simultaneously forbids and welcomes. In other words, at the moment when Socrates' disciples succeed in suppressing their tears, the painful affect of the text is wholly deposited

in the hands of the reader, for whom tears become the most natural response. The tension between the two states—incontinent, feminine weeping and reflective, philosophical self-possession—is never resolved in this dialogue. When Phaedo and friends cease to weep, it is the reader's turn to begin.

Epilogue

“We remain the only samples of humankind,” says Deucalion to Pyrrha in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Yet in their very first step to restore the human race after the flood, the difference between man and woman manifests itself. When they turn to the oracle for advice, the goddess responds with an imperative: “Leave my temple, cover your heads, unfasten your girdled garments, and throw behind you the bones of your great mother.” Pyrrha attends to the sacred words and reacts with horror to their literal sense. But the oracle’s meaning can be captured, as Deucalion knows, only through a symbolic interpretation. “From their own stones,” he explains, “the symbolic bones of Mother Earth, a new generation of mankind is born” (Ovid, *Met.* 1.348–415).

For Ovid, the myth of the first man and woman conveys a mythical insight into the origins of hermeneutics. The question of sexual difference involves the opposition between two modes of interpretation: the literal and the symbolic. Ovid is, of course, not alone here; he gives voice to an opposition that is deeply rooted in the ancient hermeneutic tradition. At its heart we find the essential distinction between the literal and the allegorical, between a superficial and a thoroughly penetrating form of readership. And as the Ovidian version of the origin of the sexes discloses, this is, in fact, a gendered distinction based on the pairing of the literal sense with a female reader and the symbolic sense with a male one.

The history of ancient literary criticism is replete with exemplars that associate the feminine with superficial and insignificant layers of the text’s meaning. In a culture that devalued the ethos of femininity, the figure of the feminine commonly served as a negative and subsidiary category for designating literal, sensual, personal, incoherent, and even self-contradictory

meanings. The understanding of the feminine as a secondary sense is tied to the emergence of allegory in the fourth century BCE. For allegorists, the feminine is intrinsically tied to those material and concrete dimensions of the text that must be transcended in order to arrive at the abstract truth constitutive of the text's genuine core of meaning. The feminine is thus a metaphor for the text's surface, the specificity of its sense, which in the case of literature is usually equated with its narrative aspects.

This ancient intersection of gender and textuality finds its expression in two ways. On the one hand, conceptions of the text are often made to rely on metaphors of sexual difference; on the other hand, the distinction between the sexes is often articulated in terms of the difference between two textual dispositions. In Achilles Tatius's *Leucippe and Clitophon*, for example, the difference between the two lovers is made explicit by describing their response to a painting of Philomela's rape. While Clitophon discusses the painting's meaning with a male companion, Leucippe finds herself silently absorbed in the visual experience of the work. According to the men, the painting should be understood as a prefiguration of a terrible future event. Their interpretation is derived from the methodological principles of professional interpreters:

Interpreters of signs tell us to consider the story [*muthos*] of any painting we chance to see as we set out on business, and to plot the outcome of our action by analogy [*logos*] with that story's plot. (5.4)

The aim of masculine interpretation is to draw the *logos* from the *muthos*. Therefore, once the men capture the painting's hidden meaning, they lose interest in the painting itself. This is clearly not the case with the female viewer, Leucippe, who insists on embracing what she sees and making sense of precisely what meets the eye. She does not participate in the men's game of interpretation, but she is nevertheless intensely involved in the experience of looking. As she tries to understand what she sees, she turns to her lover with a request for information about the story in the painting. Achilles Tatius characterizes Leucippe's gaze as motivated by the desire for a vivid and concrete narrative. And, according to him, this is completely typical: "For there is something in the nature of women that clearly loves a tale" (*philomuthon gar pos to ton gunaikon ge nos*, 5.5.1).

Pandora's Senses is an investigation of a dimension of the text that seems to have been marginalized in antiquity because of its association with the category of the feminine. However, in focusing on the construction of these

allegedly insubstantial, feminine, aspects of the ancient text, my intention was not a direct critique of their misogynist presuppositions. Instead, I have tried to show that those prototypical feminine metaphors associated with textuality were, in fact, much more influential in shaping the ancient text than might be gathered from the canon of ancient literary criticism. This study began with the conviction that the feminine cannot be so easily relegated to the margins of the literary text. The contribution of the feminine is, and has always been, far too crucial for the question of meaning. The senses of the feminine were richer and played more intricate roles than the ones assigned to them by misogynist categories. Tracing the irreducible, albeit implicit, presence of Pandora in the space of ancient literature, I have tried to show why and how she is essential to the possibility—the formation—of the ancient text. In particular, I have focused on the dialectics between the visible and the invisible so central to Pandora's image (e.g., beauty/evil, body/soul) showing the role of this dialectics in shaping the complexity of a text as a whole. In this respect, *Pandora's Senses* seeks to move beyond a critical anatomy of ancient binary thought, beyond a critique of misogynist culture. It aspires to dismantle misogynist language by demonstrating that the notion of a text's meaningfulness would be meaningless without the presence of the feminine.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Berger, "The Latest Word from Echo," 621–40.
2. Salzman-Mitchell, *A Web of Fantasies*, 19.
3. Bergren, "Helen's Web," 19–34; Bergren, "Language and the Female in Early Greek Thought," 69–95.
4. DuBois, "Sappho and Helen," 86–87.
5. DuBois, "Sappho and Helen"; Winkler, "Gardens of Nymphs."
6. Worman, "The Body as Argument," 159; see also Austin, *Helen of Troy and Her Shameless Phantom*.
7. Doherty, "Putting the Woman Back into the Hesiodic Catalogue of Women," 308.
8. Richlin, *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, 179.
9. Richlin, "The Ethnographer's Dilemma and the Dream of a Lost Golden Age," 295.
10. Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. R. Hackforth, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Hamilton and Cairns.
11. Cavarero, *In Spite of Plato: A Feminist Rewriting of Ancient Philosophy*; Kofman, *L'enigme de la femme*; Gallop, *The Father's Seduction*.
12. Zajko and Leonard, *Laughing with Medusa*, 3.
13. Spentzou and Fowler, eds., *Cultivating the Muse*.
14. Spentzou, *Readers and Writers in Ovid's Heroides*; Salzman-Mitchell, *A Web of Fantasies*.
15. E.g., Loraux, *The Children of Athena*; Bassi, "Helen and the Discourse of Denial in Stesichorus' Palinode"; Zeitlin, *Playing the Other*.
16. "The figure of Pandora combines all the tensions and ambivalences." Vernant, *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*, 183.
17. Pucci, *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry*.

18. Cantarella, *Pandora's Daughters*; Warner, *Monuments & Maidens*; Lefkowitz, *Women in Greek Myth*; Reeder, ed., *Pandora: Women in Classical Greece*.

19. Sharrock and Morales, eds., *Intratextuality*, 5–7.

CHAPTER 1. PANDORA'S LIGHT

1. Semonides of Amorgos, who addresses the creation of different types of women, does not refer directly to Pandora.

2. The myth of Pandora has attracted the attention of many thinkers and artists, particularly since the end of the Middle Ages. See Panofsky and Panofsky, *Pandora's Box*, 3–13. A 2002 anthology on the myth of Pandora collects passages from poets, prose writers, and critics from antiquity to our own time: Renger and Musäus, eds., *Mythos Pandora*. The anthology confirms Ervin and Dor a Panofsky's claim that treatments of Pandora in antiquity were sparse. The small number of ancient authors and commentators on Pandora deal with her mostly in the context of explicating Hesiod's myth.

3. In the *Catalogue of Women* (fr. 5) a figure named Pandora appears as the first woman to make love to Zeus. M. L. West and others see this Pandora as different from the first woman of *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. See West, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women*, 125–30. The question of how to reconstruct the relationship of the *Catalogue's* Pandora to the Hesiodic image of the first woman remains open. See Osborn, "Ordering Women in Hesiod's Catalogue," 8–10, 20–21. On the date of the final version of the catalogue see Hunter, ed., *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women*, 2.

4. Ancient visual representations of the creation of Pandora typically comply with the Hesiodic version. For a catalogue and iconographic analysis of vases featuring her, see Reeder, ed., *Pandora: Women in Classical Greece*, 277–89. Ellen D. Reeder examines the volute krater in the Ashmolean Museum as an exceptional representation of Pandora: *ibid.*, 286. The Oxford vase shows Epimetheus looking at Pandora and carrying a hammer, a feature not described by Hesiod. Some scholars suggest that it reflects the influence of a lost satyr play by Sophocles entitled *Pandora* or *The Hammerers*. See Simon, "Satyr-Plays on Vases in the Time of Aeschylus," 123–48. The story of the creation of Pandora must have had a great cultural significance for Athens. According to Pausanias 1.24.7 the episode was part of the west pediment of the Parthenon. Locating Pandora within the orbit of the Athenians' gaze may indicate, as Nicole Loraux has demonstrated, the central role of the first woman in shaping the Athenian autochthonous male identity. The artificial construction of the first woman by Hephaestus was set in opposition to the represented birth of the first Athenian citizen, Erichthonios, from earth fertilized by Hephaestus's sperm. See Loraux, *The Children of Athena*, 3–71, 115 n. 17.

5. I do not claim that Hesiod invented the story of Pandora; rather, he adapted the story of the first woman in a most original manner, and subsequently

his idiosyncratic treatment of the myth became authoritative. The Pandora of *Theogony* and *Works and Days* is uniquely Hesiod's. A similar case is Apuleius's tale of Amor and Psyche in *The Golden Ass*, of which no other versions in antiquity are known. Although the story bears well-known mythological and folktale patterns, it is nevertheless identified as Apuleius's.

6. Vernant, *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*.

7. Ibid., 178–81. See the comprehensive reappraisal of Vernant's structuralist reading of Hesiod's myth of Pandora in Csapo, *Theories of Mythology*, 247–61. Vernant returns to the figure of the first woman in a recently published collection of essays: "Pandora," in Lissarrague and Schmitt, eds., *Ève et Pandora*, 29–37.

8. Vernant, *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*, 170–77. Vernant does not address the interesting dissimilarities between the two Hesiodic versions in connection with the Pandora episode. As Nicole Loraux has shown, in *Works and Days* Pandora almost gains human status by means of the dichotomy between her body and soul; in *Theogony*, she remains a static visual image. This difference is significant in determining the meaning that each of these Hesiodic works seeks to express through the figure of Pandora. See the relevant discussion in Loraux, *The Children of Athena*, 81.

9. For example, Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*.

10. Vernant, *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*, 183.

11. See Derrida, "Différance."

12. Pucci, *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry*, 101.

13. Ibid., 100–101. Pucci's analysis is based on the two versions of Pandora in the Hesiodic corpus.

14. Reprinted in Zeitlin, *Playing the Other*, 412. "Travesties of Gender and Genre in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae*" was first published in Foley, ed., *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*, 169–217.

15. Zeitlin, *Playing the Other*, 53–86.

16. Zeitlin discusses these conventions of the misogynist tradition in "The Dynamics of Misogyny," in *Playing the Other*, 87–119; it was first published in *Arethusa* 11 (1978): 149–84.

17. See Zeitlin, *Playing the Other*, especially 81–86.

18. Ibid., 81.

19. Loraux, *The Children of Athena*, 81–82.

20. Recent interpretations examine the Pandora episode in the larger context of the history of the notion of images in antiquity. See, for example, Sharrock, "The Love of Creation," 169–82; Steiner, *Images in Mind*, 24–26, 186–90.

21. DuBois, "Eros and the Woman," 114.

22. All translations in this book are mine unless otherwise noted.

23. M. L. West remarks on lines 118–19: "These two lines are ignored by Pl. *Symp.* 178B and Arist. *Metaph.* 984a27"; he argues for their authenticity in his edition of *Theogony*, 193–94.

24. For a different interpretation of the primordial Eros, see Vernant, “One . . . Two . . . Three: Eros,” 465–78.

25. While Eros denotes the general notion of desire, Himeros conveys a more specific, irresistible, and strong sexual desire.

26. And see Claude Calame’s treatment of the relationship between Eros and Aphrodite in *The Poetics of Eros in Ancient Greece*, 29–33.

27. At this cosmological stage, Eros’s association with Aphrodite suppresses its primordial meaning as the formless source of beauty. As a subject of Aphrodite, Eros comes to signify the attraction to beauty.

28. On the general distribution of feminine powers among the gods in *Theogony*, see Arthur, “Cultural Strategies in Hesiod’s *Theogony*,” 63–82 and specifically 67 on the “feminized” form of Eros.

29. In addition to Gaia as a feminine principle of motherhood, the figure of Hecate is no less important (*Th.* 411–52). Hecate, like Gaia, represents a generative power, though a completely different one. On Hecate’s function as a *kourotrophos*, a nurse of the young, see Zeitlin, *Playing the Other*, 74–81. Gaia and Hecate represent the maternal aspect of femininity, which *Theogony* denies the figures of Aphrodite and Pandora, thus establishing the traditional opposition between the figure of the mother and the figure of the seductive woman. On the creation of feminine identities by canonical male authors see Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*.

30. *Oaros* is essentially feminine talk, as the meaning of *oar* (“wife”) indicates.

31. See, for example, Semonides’ *logoi aphrodisioi* (7.90–91), characterizing feminine talk.

32. In *Works and Days* Aphrodite plays a significant role in shaping Pandora’s beauty. Yet even in that version Pandora is, first and foremost, the result of a male conceptualization.

33. On the relationship between Aphrodite and Pandora as disrupting the primal harmony that reigns among men in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, see duBois, “Eros and the Woman,” 97–116 and especially 102. A. S. Brown shows how Pandora’s visibility in Hesiod’s works manifests an intentional resemblance to the figure of the golden Aphrodite, as principally displayed in Pandora’s golden diadem. See Brown, “Aphrodite and the Pandora Complex,” 26–47.

34. On the structural similarity between the birth of Aphrodite and the birth of Pandora, see Schwabl, *Hesiods Theogonie: Eine unitarische Analyse*, 80.

35. This feminine line is suggested by Ann L. T. Bergren in “The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite,” 1–41.

36. Examining the story of Pandora as the origin myth of misogyny, Jens Holzhausen asks: “Warum hat Zeus es zugelassen, da? Prometheus in dieser Weise den gewünschten Ausgleich wieder aufhebt? Warum hat er seinem Gegenspieler, den ihn betrogen hat, nicht sofort gefesselt und bereits nach seiner ersten List unschädlich gemacht?” Holzhausen points out that since Zeus knew of Prometheus’s

manipulation of the distribution of meat, he could have prevented the whole sequence of events leading to the creation of the first woman. In allowing Prometheus to help mankind, Zeus set the stage for punishing Prometheus and creating Pandora. Ultimately Zeus's plan was to separate the human from the divine. Holzhausen, "Das 'Übel' der Frauen," 13.

37. Cf. *Works and Days*, 57–58, where a similar declaration prefaces the creation of Pandora, and the account of the creation itself underscores the negative properties the divine makers have given her.

38. See Zeitlin, *Playing the Other*, 73 and n. 35.

39. Brown, trans., *Theogony*, 9.

40. This break in the Hesiodic narrative has been noticed by several scholars, who consider it a breach of the poem's initial aim. "By this time [line 506] Hesiod had lost interest in cosmogony, and says no more of the way in which things came to be. The remainder of the poem is concerned to explain the world as it is rather than to identify stages in its development." Barron, "Hesiod," 54. Cf. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus*, 50. The structure of the poem has inspired numerous searches for the "original" Hesiodic text and efforts to distinguish it from later interpolations. In addition to textual criticism of this sort, other scholars have attempted to solve the hermeneutic difficulties that any reader of *Theogony* confronts by introducing different structural divisions into the work. Richard Hamilton surveys several structural analyses: *The Architecture of Hesiodic Poetry*, 4–14.

41. On these last developments see Clay, "The World of Hesiod," 131–55.

42. The Nereids and the Oceanids are exceptions to this generalization, two feminine groups distinctive for their beauty and their beneficial impact on humanity. However, these are particular elements in the universe; descriptions of them do not refer to the beauty of the world as a whole. Other aspects of beauty, meanwhile, coincide with the sense of terror that characterizes the appearance of female monsters such as the Harpies, the Graiae, and Ceto.

43. Commenting on lines 736–39 in his edition of *Theogony*, 363.

44. The same passage as 807–10.

45. Cf. Vernant, *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*, 180, in a reference to Paladas of Alexandria, who, commenting on Pandora as a substitute for fire, provides the cliché that feminine fire is inextinguishable.

46. In Homeric poetry, as Raymond Adolph Prier has shown, stipulating a powerful appearance for both objects and heroes requires the presence of fire. See Prier, *Thauma Idesthai*, 46–50.

47. Prier, *ibid.*, 83, on the visible force of *charis* that is recurrent in Homeric poetry: "The gods, in fact, are expert at surrounding the human being with the necessary 'grace' to induce sight-wonder." See the Homeric examples: *ibid.*, 83–84.

48. *Thauma idesthai*, 575, 581; *thaumasia*, 584; *thauma*, 598.

49. Translated by F. M. Cornford, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Hamilton and Cairns.

50. *Thaumasia* refers to the many wild creatures. The visual emphasis is on the diadem's motifs, which are described as seeming like (*eoikota*) creatures with voices (*zoöisin phoneesin*).

51. *Thauma thnetoisi brotoisi* ("a wonder for mortal human beings").

52. Ann L. T. Bergren and Froma Zeitlin note the connection between the *sema* and Pandora. Bergren, "Language and the Female in Early Greek Thought," 75; Zeitlin, *Playing the Other*, 81.

53. Cf. West, ed., *Theogony*.

54. See *ibid.* on this line and the analogous example from the Homeric epic.

55. This feature is also crucial to the description of Pandora in *Works and Days*. Considering the different stages of her creation there (59–68), we see that the gods' concern is to arouse the consciousness of men toward the mechanism of their human senses, especially seeing and hearing.

56. Loraux, *The Children of Athena*, 115, examines the ancient Greek notion of autochthony by juxtaposing the myth of Pandora and the myth of Erichthonios. "*Pandora and Erichthonios*—the couple, whether well or badly matched, that declares the Athenian asymmetry between citizens, *andres Athenaioi*, and 'women.'"

57. On Pandora's role in separating men from gods, see Holzhausen, "Das 'Übel' der Frauen," 14–15.

58. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie*, 192.

59. As Loraux observes, after Pandora men are no longer called by the general term for humankind, *anthrophoi*; now they are individual men, *andres*. "She separates them from themselves, since she introduces sexuality, that asymmetry of self and other . . . the dreaded effects of woman and the word *gyne*: the woman is no sooner named than the *anthropoi* are transformed into *andres*. And so they remain." See *The Children of Athena*, 77.

CHAPTER 2. PANDORA AND THE MYTH OF OTHERNESS

1. George Steiner connects the myth of Pandora to the myth of the Tower of Babel. He identifies the "accidental release of linguistic chaos" in the story of Babel with the fatal opening of Pandora's box and the resulting dispersion of diseases. According to Steiner, both myths articulate the human fall in terms of a linguistic catastrophe: the loss of one tongue, Eden's *Ur-Sprache*. See Steiner, *After Babel*, 59; see also Littau, "The Primal Scattering of Languages." Reading the myth of Pandora as a myth about language, Karin Littau does not see it as a story of the loss of a primal tongue. As an image of multiplicity, according to Littau, Pandora poses a radical alternative to the *Ur-Sprache* myth: the possibility of mother tongue that, like the feminine sex, was never one.

2. Simone de Beauvoir's pioneering study has shown that hierarchical oppositions between masculine sameness and feminine otherness have had a direct impact on women's lives and history. In the introduction to *The Second Sex*, she attacked the traditional engendering of women as Other on the grounds that it

reproduces the “assertion of masculine privilege.” Women’s otherness results from the way men perceive them. De Beauvoir contended that women need to challenge men’s point of view by asking why woman has been defined as the Other and rejecting this identification. De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, xx n. 3, xxxv.

3. Early feminist approaches to classical scholarship in the 1970s needed, first of all, to come to terms with the absence of serious studies of the history of women in antiquity, a lacuna that was itself indicative of the status of women as Other, not only within the ancient world but in current classical scholarship as well. Early gender studies in the field of classics began by devoting themselves to the important fieldwork of mapping the various gender codes that were contained in the ancient dichotomies of center and periphery. In discussing representative early scholarly works on gender divisions in antiquity, Kathryn J. Gutzwiller and Ann Norris Michelini note: “What these scholars have done is simply to shift attention from the masculine half of the gender code, which has privileged such masculine-gendered activities as warfare and political life, to the feminine half, which privileges sexuality, marriage customs, and family life.” Gutzwiller and Michelini, “Women and Other Strangers,” 68.

4. Woman, as Loraux puts it in *The Children of Athena*, 77, “separates men from gods. Better yet, she separates them from themselves, since she introduces sexuality, that asymmetry of self and other.”

5. See, for example, Page duBois’s analysis of the figure of Medea as epitomizing the notion of the Other: “By the very fact of her presence in the city, by her violence, her female, bestial, barbarian nature, Medea exemplifies the eruption of difference within the family, within the *polis*, among the Hellenes. Difference is represented by Euripides as *internal* rather than external, omnipresent in the body of the Greeks. The other, bestial, foreign, most of all female, is for Euripides a marginalized marked figure who is nonetheless at the center of the tragic drama. Her difference results from internal conflict, from forces within the *oikos* and the *polis* which do battle with one another.” DuBois, *Centaurs and Amazons*, 118.

6. “In the *Theogony*, the first woman is her adornments—she has no body.” Loraux, *The Children of Athena*, 81.

7. One of the interesting points on which *Works and Days* differs from *Theogony* is in its giving a name to the first woman.

8. In this sense my interpretation goes beyond the attempt to map the two epics’ different conventions and authorial stances. For a different approach that explains Hesiod’s personal dimension in terms of a generic convention, see Griffith, “Personality in Hesiod,” 37–63.

9. Pucci, *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry*, 9.

10. *Ibid.*, 13.

11. “Certainly when Hesiod speaks of a similarity between the false discourse of the Muses and truth he implies a distortion, a deviation. We have denoted this distortion, invention, and deflection by the word ‘difference,’ and thus far we have

used the word in its usual meaning; but we will show that this ‘difference’ operates in the text as ‘difference and deferral’ in the special sense elaborated by Derrida. We have already hinted at this sense when we demonstrated that Hesiod’s statement implies the absence of an ‘original’ signified. Truth, which according to Hesiod should be the source of his song, appears in reality to be wholly contained within his *logos*, inscribed in it: it is like a dubbing without original track, like an imitation of that which is forever absent, like assimilation of an ‘original.’” Ibid., 16.

12. Or it is also the inspiration of the kings who, with sweet and straight words, address their subjects (*Th.* 80–103).

13. Hesiod in fact defines the two kinds of poetry as categorically different from each other. Pucci’s understanding of a lost divine source of truth that inspires different human attempts at reproduction seems to be closer to Plato’s hierarchical series of inspired reproductions. As suggested by the metaphor of the magnet in *Ion*, there is a hierarchical relationship between the highest poetry of the Muses, the inspired poetry of the epic poets, and, finally, the inspired performance of the rhapsodes (*Ion* 533d–34e). In my view, however, Hesiod’s poetic notion in *Theogony* cannot reflect such a hierarchy. As I wish to show, Hesiod does not present divine and truthful poetry with its mere pale human imitation. Rather, in the preface of *Theogony*, he elaborates two distinct kinds of poetics.

14. Although Hesiod remains respectful of the Muses, his address to them (*W&D* 1–4) is rather short and formal. He acknowledges their influence on human creativity and dedicates to them the tripod he won in the poetry contest, but his gratitude is ceremonial and religious (*W&D* 650–59). In this poem he is a devotee of the Muses, but he does not confuse their divine patronage with his own poetic authority.

15. Compare, for example, poetry that aspires to the divine omnipotent perspective. See *Iliad* 2.483–92.

16. We should notice that *Theogony* and *Works and Days* present two different pictures of the relationship between poetry and temporality. In *Theogony*, the Muses are associated with the knowledge of the present, leaving the past and the future for human poetry (*Th.* 38–39). In *Works and Days*, Hesiod rivals the Muses’ competence by allowing human poetry to dwell in the present. Nevertheless, we also need to notice that the “present” dealt with by human poetry is different from the one serving as the subject of divine poetry. For divine poetry, the present is, in essence, eternal. It is not part of what appears to humans as a chronology, but encapsulates harmoniously the different aspects of temporality. In contrast, the human poetical form of *Works and Days* is based on the common identification of the present with the experience of the “now.”

17. Moses Finley, in an article examining ancient and modern Utopias, distinguishes between Utopia and the myth of the Garden of Eden. While Utopia posits “a goal towards which one may legitimately and hopefully strive,” the myth of the

Garden of Eden produces “various primitivistic images which lack a concrete institutional criticism.” Accordingly, Finley reads the Hesiodic Golden Age as sheer fantasy devoid of any reality principle. At the same time, he points to a view shared by the myths of the Golden Age and Utopia—namely, the idea that “a world without evil is not even conceivable.” Finley, “Utopianism Ancient and Modern,” 6–7.

18. Jean-Pierre Vernant substitutes a structural reading of Hesiod’s myth of the Five Ages for the chronological one and accordingly argues that the relationship between the Golden and Silver Ages is not diachronic. Rather, “the race of silver which is inferior to the race that preceded it exists and is defined only in relation to it. It is on the same plane as the race of gold, and is its exact counterpart and opposite. Pious rule is opposed by impious rule, and the figure of the king who shows respect for *dike* is contrasted with that of the king who has committed himself to *hubris*. What seals the doom of the race of silver is, in effect, their ‘mad immoderation.’” Vernant, “Hesiod’s Myth of the Races,” 11 (originally published in French in 1965). His reading, which radically diverges from the usual one, was criticized by J. Defradas in “Le mythe hésiodique des races.” However, there is no question that for both Vernant and his critics who read the myth diachronically, the Golden Age represents a perfect and exemplary mode of being.

19. Criticism of the human tendency to perceive the world as their own possession is a common theme in later versions of the Five Ages: e.g., Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* 1.89–150.

20. The Five Ages are the Golden, Silver, Bronze, Heroic, and Iron. The fourth age, that of the great heroes, repeats the characteristics of the Golden Age. Like the latter, whose exclusivity is expressed in the nature of its inhabitants and in its limited temporality, the Heroic Age represents an elite club that is temporally and spatially out of reach.

21. Finley, “Utopianism Ancient and Modern,” 6–8.

22. Pierre Vidal-Naquet compares Hesiod’s myth of the human races with Homer’s Phaeacia in “Land and Sacrifice in the *Odyssey*” (1970), reprinted in Schein, ed., *Reading the Odyssey*, 33–53.

23. In the utopian city of justice, women bear children who are similar to their fathers (*W&D* 235). See Pucci, *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry*, 106, on the resemblance of children to the father as the mark of the Golden Age.

24. Differences emerge out of disputes between people, but also out of ambiguities of meaning. Consider, for example, the dual appearance of the goddess Eris (*W&D* 11–26). Hesiod distinguishes between a bad Eris and a good one. The first represents the strife whose origins are envy and greed; the other represents a positive rivalry that encourages creativity, excellence, and prosperity. The double meaning of *Eris* is not only an example of how human language works; it is also crucial to understanding how ambiguity and difference are inherent in human nature.

25. This is the oppositional characterization that Maria S. Marsilio employs in her discussion of the brothers Hesiod and Perses. See Marsilio, *Farming and Poetry in Hesiod's Works and Days*, 1–14.

26. This pair of oppositions is suggested and analyzed in Edwards, *Hesiod's Askra*.

27. Edwards continues (ibid., 180): “It is in this sense that *Works and Days* is a didactic poem and offers instruction.”

28. Polynices and Eteocles are typical rival brothers, but it is not clear whether they are twins. The question of their distinctive or identical character arises in Aeschylus's *Seven against Thebes*. See especially the way the chorus regards them as having an identical nature: *orgen homoios* (678). In Statius's *Thebaid*, the theme of twining is structurally fundamental to the epic and is therefore emphasized in the context of the brothers' rivalry. See the introduction and commentary by Charles Stanley Ross in *Publius Papinius Statius's Thebaid*. In the following examples I am concerned only with myths involving identical twins.

29. In Duckworth, ed., *The Complete Roman Drama*.

30. For a discussion of the encounter between identical twins as a meeting between consciousness and the unconscious, see Eleanor Winsor Leach, “*Meam quom formam noscito*: Language and Characterization in the *Menaechmi*.” See also McCarthy, *Slaves, Masters, and the Art of Authority in Plautine Comedy*, 74.

31. But, in fact, the arrogance of these perfect human beings puts their Golden Age self-sufficiency in question. Arrogance is, after all, a sign of human imperfection.

32. Allen, *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. 2, *The Symposium*.

33. The position of the genitals is made clear from the description in *Symposium* 1901b5–c1.

34. The closest human equivalent is probably the experience of being pregnant.

35. For example, Allen, *The Dialogues of Plato*, 2:34–35; Dover, *Plato: Symposium*, 113–14.

36. For a psychoanalytical discussion of Aristophanes' myth that places particular emphasis on the desire for a lost object, see Brenkman, “The Other and the One,” 396–456.

37. I follow R. E. Allen's translation with some modifications. In regard to *paidikon* (gen. pl.), I have altered Allen's “beloved” to the more specific “darling boy.” For *pephukoton*, I have changed his “who is naturally” to “who would naturally become.”

38. In *Works and Days* the appearance of the first woman epitomizes all the new baneful sorrows (*kedea lugra*, 49) by means of which Zeus turns the blissful human condition into a wretched one. In addition, Hesiod refers to the first woman as a calamity (*pema*, 82), and thereby underscores her transformative role in the history of mankind. Her novel presence in the world marks a crisis: human life ceases to be what it had been before her appearance.

39. This thesis would be elaborated by Longus in *Daphnis and Chloë*, which portrays a love relationship that requires the mediation of *techné*, since the two lovers discover themselves to be unable to function within the instinctive world of nature.

CHAPTER 3. THE SOCRATIC PANDORA

1. See the analysis of the Hesiodic female figure in Pucci, *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry*, 105–15.

2. David Konstan's study of sexuality in ancient literature has shown how conceptions of *eros* are always tied to the generic framework of the text dealing with *eros*. See Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry*.

3. Hesiod, we should remember, composes local poetry that is addressed to a local audience. Moreover, his refusal to leave his own farm for long voyages cannot be divorced from his refusal to sing the praises of heroic navigations, for such themes are not a part of his personal experience (*W&D* 650–53). The relationship between sailing and heroic poetry is noted in Rosen, "Poetry and Sailing in Hesiod's *Works and Days*," 99–113.

4. On the poetic dispute between Hesiod and Perses, see Marsilio, *Farming and Poetry in Hesiod's Works and Days*, 49–50.

5. Mark Griffith remarks that "the character and behavior of Perses vary according to the rhetorical point that Hesiod wishes to make." See Griffith, "Personality in Hesiod," 57.

6. On the writing tablet as an image of virginity see duBois, *Sowing the Body*, 140–47. Examining the metaphor of inscription in Aeschylus's *Suppliants*, duBois writes (*ibid.*, 145): "It is about the production of wives from the raw material of girls. Girls are wild animals, untamed, raw, almost undifferentiated sexually. And they are still their father's property, that is, *inscribed* by their father. The proper end of a 'girl' is marriage and reproduction, that is, inscription by the husband."

7. Pucci, *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry*, 112, refers to lines 695 ff. as aiming to establish control of the woman as a figure of difference: "The woman is taken *inside* a man's house to be changed from an 'other' into something like man himself. For teaching her good ways means making her like man, that is, without any difference."

8. All translations from *Oeconomicus* are by Sarah B. Pomeroy; see Pomeroy, *Xenophon, Oeconomicus*.

9. Pomeroy, *ibid.*, 270, comments in regard to this passage that "most upper-class women could probably sing and dance as required at religious ceremonies." She also remarks that Ischomachus's wife had some knowledge of reading (9.10) and of nursing and pharmacology (7.37).

10. An example of feminine self-moderation, *sophrosyne* (*Oec.* 7.14–15).

11. Pomeroy, *Xenophon, Oeconomicus*, 275, observes that Xenophon is the first to connect female *sophrosyne* with good administration of the household.

12. The husband's goal is likewise achieved, since the educated wife is recognized as having attained a masculine understanding (*andrike dianoiā*, *Oec.* 10.1). Having a masculine understanding does not mean, however, that Ischomachus has created a doubled self or that his wife has turned into a male. She has, rather, partially assimilated, or become familiar with, the values of masculinity. And with this familiarization she is granted a voice of her own.

13. Ischomachus teaches his wife that man, in contrast to woman, works outside: "I think the god, from the very beginning, designed the nature of woman for the indoor work and concerns and the nature of man for the outdoor work" (*Oec.* 7.22). The opposition between male and female is explained through the opposition between outside and inside, and then through man's physical strength and woman's complementary weakness. Furthermore, motherhood and the instinctive care of children strengthen the association of the woman with the home, while the absence of such instincts together with male aggressiveness would seem to corroborate his natural place outdoors (*Oec.* 7.25).

14. Yet we might regard the marital promise of endowing the wife with responsibility over the household as seductive, much as Hades' promise that Persephone would become the queen of the underworld may be indicative of his appeal to her.

15. The reference to Ischomachus as Xenophon's *alter ego* is made by Pomeroy, *Xenophon, Oeconomicus*, 259.

16. This betrayal is symbolically reenacted in marriages by the departure of man and woman from their parents' homes.

17. Consider traditional judgments that associate Xenophon's style of writing with simplicity, purity, honesty, and lack of artifice: Pomeroy, *Xenophon, Oeconomicus*, 10–15.

18. See Michel Foucault on this passage in *The Use of Pleasure*, 161–65.

19. Stewart, *Art, Desire, and the Body in Ancient Greece*, 24.

20. Stewart (*ibid.*, 40) argues that nakedness is the exclusive sign of the male from the late eighth century on.

21. To Plautus's audience these issues reflected a current public debate over the Oppian law (195 BCE), which restricted the luxury of women's costumes, forbidding them to own more than half an ounce of gold jewelry and/or wear purple-dyed clothing (*purpura*). See Livy, *History of Rome*, 34.1.

22. See the discussion of the "Anti-Cosmetic" tradition and the bibliography in Gibson, *Ars Amatoria Book 3*, 21–25.

23. Hamilton, *The Architecture of Hesiodic Poetry*, 71–72.

24. Pandora is an image of poetry; specifically, her duality may be compared to the dual effects of poetry—pain and pleasure, memory and forgetfulness—that characterize the voice of Hesiod's Muses and Homer's Sirens. On the relationship between Pandora and the Muses, see Pucci, *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry*, 107.

On the relationship between the Sirens and the Hesiodic Muses, see Segal, *Singers, Heroes, and Gods in the Odyssey*, 100–106.

25. Hurwit, “Beautiful Evil,” 171–86.

26. The jar represents Pandora’s feminine body, and specifically her uterus and genitalia. For a discussion of the semantic relationship between Pandora and the jar, see Sissa, *Greek Virginity*, 154–56.

27. Although Aspasia, Pericles’ famous concubine, inspires Socrates to memorize and deliver her funerary speech in *Menexenus*, it is not her physical beauty that inspires him so much as her rhetorical capacity. Yet in her discussion of the role of the hetaera in classical Athens as an ideal metaphor for epideictic oratory, Laura K. McClure shows how Socrates connects Aspasia’s bodily gestures precisely to her seductive rhetoric. See McClure, *Courtesans at Table*, 124.

28. Xenophon’s Socrates, as McClure notices (*ibid.*, 125), undermines the goals of the epideictic discourse by succumbing to the allure of the beautiful.

29. Simon Goldhill notices the similarity between the two names, both of which carry a divine significance: *Diotima* means a divine honor, while *Theodote* means a divine gift. Goldhill, “The Seduction of the Gaze,” 105.

30. Archibald A. Day mentions this episode among others that refer to Socrates’ role as an erotic instructor. See Day, *The Origins of Latin Love Elegy*, 92 n. 1.

31. For example, J. J. Pollitt sees *Memorabilia* 3.10 as introducing fourth-century art theories, but overlooks the aesthetic significance of the conversation with Theodote. See Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art*, 1–30. Vivienne J. Gray, however, presents the conversation as an integral part of a series of conversations with artists: Gray, *The Framing of Socrates*, 144–46. See also Goldhill, “The Seduction of the Gaze,” 109–12.

32. Patricia A. Rosenmeyer ties Theodote’s seductions to her adornments. She emphasizes the fact that it is Theodote’s attire rather than her naked body that attracts the gaze of others: “It is unclear whether we are meant to imagine her posing nude: she is said to show the painters ‘as much of herself as was right’ [*hosa kalos echoi*], but Socrates notes that she is *polutelos kekosmemenen* (3.11.4): either ‘sumptuously dressed,’ or ‘adorned [only] with jewelry.’ At the very least, we may imagine her dressed to attract, to seduce.” Rosenmeyer, “(In-)Versions of Pygmalion,” 246.

33. All translations from Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* are by Amy L. Bonnette; see Bonnette, *Memorabilia*.

34. Rosenmeyer, “(In-)Versions of Pygmalion,” 248, writes that Theodote’s feminine seductive skill is the ability “to control her own image . . . invent a self to be remembered and admired.”

35. For a discussion of the politics of the gaze in the context of Socrates’ encounter with Theodote, see Goldhill, “The Seduction of the Gaze.”

36. Socrates uses conventional hunting metaphors to illuminate the need for an invisible contrivance in the erotic profession. The fabrication of an undetectable

trap is essential to a successful hunt. By the same token, the amorous net should be craftily designed so that its seduction will appear to the future lover as a matter of sheer impulse or chance (3.11.5–8).

37. Translation by Hugh Tredennick in E. Hamilton and H. Cairns, eds., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*.

38. The Hesiodic myth is present in several dialogues. See, for example, the imagery in *Philebus* of the craftsman's mixing of pleasure with thought (59e), and the association of the craftsman with Hephaestus (61c), which I read as a direct allusion to the creation of Pandora in *Works and Days*.

39. This point is elaborated in chapter 1, where I discuss the wonder Pandora inspires in Hesiod's *Theogony*. Plato explicitly acknowledges his debt to *Theogony* in Phaedrus's speech in *Symposium* 178b3.

40. All translations from the *Symposium* are by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff; see Nehamas and Woodruff, *Plato's Symposium*.

41. See the opening of the *Protagoras* (309a), where Socrates is described as hunting after the beauty of Alcibiades. On the hunting metaphor in Plato, see Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 92.

42. Alcibiades addresses Socrates as a wonderful man in *Symposium* 219c and refers to his wonderful interiority in 217a.

43. As Socrates enters the room Agathon treats him: "Socrates, come lie down next to me. Who knows, if I touch you, I may catch a bit of the wisdom that came to you under my neighbor's porch" (*Symp.* 175d).

44. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 183.

45. Of course, Platonic dialogues present a diverse picture of this relationship: see Robinson, *Plato's Psychology*, 20.

46. Examining the significance of Socrates' body in *Phaedo*, Nicole Loraux reads the dialogue "against the grain of the text, or at least its apparent content." Loraux, *The Experience of Tiresias*, 165. Her conclusion is that "Plato is simultaneously playing on two levels when he proclaims that the body is nothing, yet he uses the language of the body to speak of the soul." According to Loraux, the body is the means through which the immortality of the soul, its ultimate superiority, is commemorated. Although the body serves the ideology of the soul, it remains in itself an empty sign.

47. "Socrates has apparently seen, first, that any talk of the self or person involves talk about *both* body and soul, and, second, that the relationship between the two is not the crude one of numeral addition and subtraction, but the philosophically more respectable one of entailment." Robinson, *Plato's Psychology*, 8. Socrates acknowledges the importance of bodily beauty in the context of his discussion of the philosophical *eros*. See Nussbaum, "Eros and Ethical Norms," 70–71.

48. Socrates' response to the beautiful body of Charmides is strongly physical; see *Charmides* 154b, 155d–e.

49. “His soul, according to him. In the flesh-and-blood discussion, however, Socrates’s self has a lot to do with his body.” Loraux, *The Experience of Tiresias*, 160.

50. As Hugo Koning noted to me in a conversation, the names *Theodorus* and *Pandora* are closely related. Introducing the young Theaetetus, Theodorus realizes the act of giving signified by his own name and the first woman’s.

51. In Hamilton and Cairns, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*.

52. See the introduction in Nehamas and Woodruff, *Plato’s Symposium*, xxiii.

53. David Halperin connects Platonic *eros* and ironic forms of textuality in “Love’s Irony,” 48–58.

CHAPTER 4. PANDORA’S VOICE AND THE EMERGENCE OF OVID’S POETIC PERSONA

1. See my analysis of Xenophon’s portrayal of the ideal bride in chapter 3.

2. Salzman-Mitchell, *A Web of Fantasies*, 152.

3. See Goldhill, *Language, Sexuality, Narrative*.

4. In “The Dynamics of Misogyny: Myth and Mythmaking in Aeschylus’s *Oresteia*” and in “The Politics of Eros in the Danaid Trilogy of Aeschylus,” both reprinted in *Playing the Other*, 87–171, Froma Zeitlin addresses the question of feminine power in Aeschylus’s trilogies. “The two trilogies, the *Oresteia* and that of the Danaids, complement one another as variations on a single theme, involving the institution of marriage in Argos and the slaying of husbands in response to the dismissal of woman’s concerns and rights. I have underlined the affinities between Clytemnestra and the Danaids, both of whom demand *kratos* for the female.” *Playing the Other*, 169.

5. As Zeitlin remarks (ibid., 91): “The portrait of Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon* specifically links her independence of thought and action with a desire to rule, . . . Clytemnestra begins, in fact, as woman in charge; as the chorus remarks, she is entitled to rule in the absence of the husband-king (Ag. 258–60, cf. 84.)”

6. Denniston and Page, *Agamemnon*, 68.

7. Note the affinity of *auctor* and *auctoritas*, especially in the context of medieval schooling, where any canonization of a pagan or Christian author and his inclusion in the monastic schools’ curricula was a proclamation of his *auctoritas*.

8. See Doherty, *Siren Songs*, 75–76. I discuss the confrontation between Penelope and Telemachos further in chapter 6.

9. McCarthy, *Slaves, Masters, and the Art of Authority in Plautine Comedy*, 26.

10. On the chain of illusions in *Miles Gloriosus*, see Lev Kenaan, “Truth and Appearance in Roman Comedy,” 147–68.

11. Slavitt and Bovie, eds., *Plautus: The Comedies*, vol. 1.

12. Sharon L. James writes: “Thus we can say not only that the *puella* herself is elegy but that she creates it, for without her specific yet generic character (named

or not), Roman love elegy cannot exist. The *puella* herself is the elegiac Muse.” James, *Learned Girls and Male Persuasion*, 23.

13. The image of the woman as the poet’s source of inspiration is part of the process of the secularization of the Muse in Roman literature. See Spentzou, “Secularizing the Muse,” 1–28.

14. See Alison Sharrock on the image of the Muse as a whore and a goddess in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, and specifically her reference to Ovid’s amatory poetry: “In the amatory poetry, the Muse is a sexy and passive elegiac *puella*, who is courted, desired, fought, and rejected.” Sharrock, “An A-musing Tale,” 225.

15. Catullus addresses the poet Caecilius as *tener poeta* (35.1), while Ovid names Propertius *tener* (AA 3.333); cf. Martial 7.14.3, *teneri Catulli*. Ovid also uses *tener* to characterize love poetry: *teneri modi* (Am. 2.1.4), *teneri versus* (AA 2.273); and in *Tristia* 2.361 he uses *tener* to refer to both the form and content of love poetry: *denique composui teneros non solus amores* (“moreover, I was not alone in composing tender loves”).

16. Kennedy, *The Arts of Love*, 32. See also Wyke, “Reading Female Flesh: *Amores* 3.1,” 111–43; Miller, *Subjecting Verses*, 137–43.

17. On the effeminate persona of Propertius, see Jasper Griffin’s discussion of the resemblance between his persona and that of the effeminate Antony: Griffin, *Latin Poets and Roman Life*, 32–47; see also Gold, “‘But Ariadne Was Never There in the First Place,’” 91–92.

18. Maria Wyke provides a stimulating analysis of the development of the study of gender play in Roman love elegy by pointing to changes in feminist approaches to the genre: Wyke, “Taking the Woman’s Part,” 110–28.

19. In contrast to those treatments that completely identify Roman love elegy with the traditional male rhetoric of desire. Paul Veyne, in *Roman Erotic Elegy*, 136, analyzes the genre as the discourse of the egocentric male lover; Alison Sharrock, in “Womanufacture,” 36–49, argues that the Ovidian Pygmalion narrative, the story of the creation of a woman as the male artist’s object of desire, offers a paradigmatic myth for the discourse of love elegy. See also Wyke’s discussion in “Taking the Woman’s Part,” 111–15.

20. Wyke, “Taking the Woman’s Part,” 117; Kennedy, *The Arts of Love*, 31–33.

21. An analysis of the discourse of effeminacy in Roman culture with an emphasis on the various uses of *mollitia* (“softness”) is provided by Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome*, 63–97; Corbeill, “Dining Deviants in Roman Political Invective,” 99–128; Williams, *Roman Homosexualities*, 125–59. More relevant to our discussion are the treatments of effeminate rhetoric in the Roman love elegy; cf. Wyke, “Taking the Woman’s Part,” 115–21.

22. Kennedy, *The Arts of Love*, 24–45.

23. As Judith Hallett argues in her seminal article: “The amatory elegists, or at least their literary *personae*, speak on behalf of the people whose iconoclastic actions ultimately struck Augustus as threatening. They constitute what present-day

social historians would call a ‘counter-culture.’” Hallett, “The Role of Women in Roman Elegy,” 108.

24. As Wyke remarks in “Taking the Woman’s Part” (120): “The self-presentation of elegy’s male *ego* as a morally depraved effeminate could be read, for example, as legitimating the moral programme of Augustus by marking out precisely the kind of behaviour which was thought to require reform.”

25. Kennedy, *The Arts of Love*, 37.

26. Wyke, “Taking the Woman’s Part,” 110.

27. In Wyke’s words (ibid., 120–21): “At the very least, the first-person confession of the effeminacy of both elegy’s erotics and poetics keeps the conventional gender categories of Augustan Rome constantly in play in this genre.”

28. Miller, *Subjecting Verses*, 133.

29. Ibid., 135. Elsewhere (146) he describes Propertius’s discourse as feminine.

30. The reference is to 2.1, 2.7, 2.15, and 2.16; see Miller, *Subjecting Verses*, 146.

31. “Propertius is a woman because his subject position cannot be precisely located in any one spot within conventional Roman ideological space.” Ibid.

32. Ibid., 130.

33. Ibid., 135, 130.

34. Frustrated by the absence of female subjectivity in the effeminate discourse of Propertius’s elegies, Wyke underscores the positive presentation of the feminine in his fourth book, which, compared with the first three, is more attentive to the feminine for its own sake. More specifically, Wyke mentions the elegies in which the speaker takes a feminine role and assumes a feminine voice: “Taking the Woman’s Part,” 121–26.

35. Although Ovid does not mention Menander by name in *Ars* 332 (*cuive pater vafri luditur arte Getae*; “or [let him be known to you] whose Father is deceived by the crafty Geta’s art”), the name “Geta” is typical of a Roman comic role, and the reference to comedy should be specifically understood in relation to Menander. As his characterization in *Amores* 1.15.17–18 shows, Ovid sees Menander as the main influence on Roman comedies: *dum fallax servus, durus pater, improba lena vivent et meretrix blanda, Menandros erit* (“As long as the cunning slave, the firm father, the indecent procuress, and the blinding lover are alive, so is Menander”). For the relevant text and commentary, see Gibson, *Ars Amatoria Book 3*, 233.

36. Philip Hardie comments on Ovid’s exceptional fondness for catalogues: “of all Latin poets, Ovid is the most persistent and the most inventive in his use of lists of various kinds.” Hardie, “The Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* and Latin Poetry,” 296.

37. It is interesting that *Amores* is introduced by a prefatory epigram carrying a self-derogatory message: “Nowhere else in the *Amores*, or in any other works written before his exile, does he [Ovid] express such a depreciatory opinion of his poetic talent, even in his obviously ironic way.” McKeown, *Ovid, Amores*, vol. 2, *A Commentary on Book One*, 3.

38. Richard Tarrant seems to support the argument that *Amores* reflects Ovid's poetic development. He writes that "if 1.15 originally concluded the fifth book of *Amores* by celebrating Ovid's achievement as a love elegist, its less prominent place in the three-book revision reflects the growth of Ovid's poetic ambitions." Tarrant, "Ovid and Ancient Literary History," 17.

39. *Amores* 1.15.38: *atque a s ollicito multus amante legar* ("and may I be often read by the anxious lover").

40. *Amores* 1.15.35–36: *vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo / pocula Castalia plena minister aqua* ("Let the crowd admire what is useless; for me, however, may Apollo serve cups filled with Castalian water").

41. Gibson, *Ars Amatoria* Book 3, 234–35.

42. *Rem.* 49, 553, 608, 814.

43. The fact that both men and women are told in *Remedia* to keep away from the poetry recommended exclusively for women in *Ars* 3 suggests that this reading list applies equally to men.

44. Comedy and tragedy might have a dangerous effect on broken-hearted viewers, as Ovid suggests in his counsel to avoid the dramatic shows (*Rem.* 755–56): *illic adsidue ficti saltantur amantes: / quid caveas, actor, quid iuuet, arte docet* ("There fictitious lovers are all the time portrayed in dance. The actor teaches you how pleasing is the thing you must avoid"). A. A. R. Henderson understands lines 753–56 to refer exclusively to pantomime. However, singing, dancing, and instrumental music were typical of other kinds of performances as well. Moreover, love stories were not restricted to pantomime; they were also part of the stock of tragic and comic themes. Henderson, *P. Ovidi Nasonis Remedia Amoris*.

45. Episodes concerning abandoned and miserable heroines may have been thought to belong to that category of dangerous poetry that the lovesick should shun. Readers consumed by extreme passions might identify with the experience of Virgil's Dido and Varro's Medea.

46. Ovid discloses his intention to move on to explore other kinds of writing (*Rem.* 392): *et capiunt animi carmina multa mei* ("my thoughts contain many poems"). On Ovid and the end of the Roman love elegy, see Gian Biagio Conte's remark that "a work such as the *Remedia*, teaching how to heal oneself of love, represents the extreme development of love poetry and brings to a symbolic close the brief period of its intense existence." Conte, *Latin Literature: A History*, 346.

47. Consider the way Horace distinguishes Sappho's love poetry from that of Alcaeus in Ode 4.9.8–12. Her uniqueness lies in her extremely vivid form of expression (4.9): *spirat adhuc amor / vivuntque comissi calores / Aeoliae fidibus puellae*. ("her love still breathes and the passions of the Aeolic girl live on entrusted to her Lyre"). See the discussion of Horace 4.9.12–14 in Ancona, "The Untouched Self," 166.

48. See Tarrant, "Ovid and Ancient History," 19; Jacobson, *Heroides*, 319–48.

49. “In order to make sense of this fact, we must first realize how strange it is. Of course, real women in Ovid’s day obviously did write letters and some even wrote poetry; but the woman writer was not a very widespread phenomenon in ancient literary culture, certainly not one that we could regard as normative or paradigmatic.” Farrel, “Reading and Writing the *Heroides*,” 311.

50. *Ibid.*, 338.

51. In this respect, the relationship between Ovid’s and Sappho’s literary identities is especially pertinent to the reading of her letter. For discussions of this question see Harvey, “Ventriloquizing Sappho, or the Lesbian Muse,” 79–104; Rimell, “Epistolary Fictions,” 126; Lindheim, *Mail and Female*, 140–41.

52. Lindheim, *Mail and Female*, 138–41.

53. DuBois, *Sappho Is Burning*, 79; see also Joan DeJean’s interpretation of the passage in Longinus in which she discusses Sappho’s poetics: DeJean, “Fictions of Sappho,” 798–99.

54. Greene, ed., *Re-Reading Sappho*.

55. On Athenian comedy’s interest in Sappho as an insatiable lover, see Most, “Reflecting Sappho,” 14.

56. See her discussion of this passage in *Mail and Female*, 170.

57. Text and translation in Campbell, *Greek Lyric*, vol. 1, *Sappho and Alcaeus*, 18–19.

58. Henry, *Prisoner of History*, 75.

59. *Ibid.*, 57–81.

60. On this tradition, see Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue*, 1–35.

61. Plato, *Phaedrus* 235b–c. DuBois, *Sappho Is Burning*, 85–87, persuasively shows how Socrates’ description of erotic symptoms echoes Sappho’s poetry.

62. Campbell, *Greek Lyric*, 1:20–21.

63. See Holt N. Parker’s discussion of the female authorial voice traditionally associated with ancient sex handbooks: “Love’s Body Anatomized,” 105–7.

64. Diotima’s vocabulary converts the Hesiodic terminology for sexual longing (*pothos*, *W&D* 66; *himeros*, *Th.* 201).

65. Halperin, “Why Is Diotima a Woman?” 257–308. Note Halperin’s prefatory statement (263): “Plato clearly means us to notice that Diotima’s conceptualization of *eros* derives from a specifically ‘feminine’ perspective.” See also Cavarero, *In Spite of Plato*, 91–120.

66. Henry, *Prisoner of History*, 54–56.

67. See, for example, Socrates and Critobulus’s discussion of friendship in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* 2.6.5–39, where Socrates remarks (2.6.36) that knowing what a good matchmaker is makes Aspasia a philosophical source of wisdom.

68. See my discussion of Socrates’ *eros* in chapter 3.

69. In reference to Varro’s famous treatment of Jason and Medea in the *Argonautae*, not to mention his neoteric love elegies: Propertius 2.34.85–86.

70. Wills, “Sappho 31 and Catullus 51,” 167–97; Itzkowitz, “On the Last Stanza

of Catullus 51,” 129–34; Segal, “*Otium and Eros*,” 817–22; O’Higgins, “Sappho’s Splintered Tongue,” 68–78.

71. See Ronnie Ancona’s intertextual reading of Horace’s Ode 1.22, in which she shows how both Sappho and Catullus function as Horace’s “Muses”: Ancona, “The Untouched Self,” 163–86.

72. Propertius has only one allusion to Sappho (2.3.19): a reference to Cynthia’s poetic talents describes her as playing the “Aeolian lyre” (*aeolio plecto*). He refers to Sappho without actually naming her. His allusion implies a secluded female discourse: she is, in other words, a female author whose audience is composed exclusively of women. Sappho is hence included with other female poets, like Corinna and Errina, who inspire his Cynthia.

73. Ovid’s homage to Sappho is characteristic of Hellenistic culture and atypical of the Roman poets. In the latter literary tradition, Sappho has not been canonized. She is absent, for example, from Quintilian’s list of recommended authors in Book 10 of his *Institutio Oratoria*.

74. Even Catullus, who emulates, translates, and Romanizes Sappho, does not mention her directly by name, except in 35.16–17: *Sapphica puella Musa doctior*. Here, too, *Sapphica Musa* is mentioned in the context of female education.

75. Sappho is often presented as an inspiring model for educated women who read or wish to compose poetry. See Hemelrijk, *Matrona Docta*, 178–80.

76. The elder Seneca refers to Ovid’s lack of self-restraint (*Controv.* 2.2.12). See Lowell Edmunds’s comment on this passage in *Intertextuality and the Reading of Roman Poetry*, 57.

77. Disrespect toward love poetry is common among Roman authors. Discussing Cicero’s reading habits, Seneca (*Ep.* 49.5) attributes to him the following statement: “Even if his lifetime were doubled he would not have time to read the lyric poets” (*Negat Cicero, si duplicetur sibi aetas, habiturum se te mpus, quo legat lyricos*). Horace’s *Ars Poetica* provides an *argumentum ex silentio* for the lower status of love elegy. On this very issue see Niall Rudd’s comment that “looking back over the literary discourse one notices that when it speaks of specific genres it mentions tragedy, comedy, epic, and choral poetry, but not love elegy.” Rudd, *Horace: Epistles and Epistle to the Pisones (Ars Poetica)*, 7.

78. Butler, *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*.

79. Alexander Dalzell uses this term as well: “What this means is that the ideal reader of the *Ars* is someone who is prepared to be shocked, or at least someone who will take delight in the thought that other readers will be shocked.” Dalzell, *The Criticism of Didactic Poetry*, 155. I agree with Dalzell (156) that Ovid’s desire to shock does not align him with Propertius’s anti-Augustan tendencies. Ovid’s shocking style, which is also apparent in his epic, *Metamorphoses*, is not strictly political. It emerges first of all from an aesthetic intention—one that has a political effect.

80. “Ovid makes his poems safe by sending respectable women away. That’s all right: once the virgins and matrons have gone we can get on with the fun. But

real and implied readers are not so easily divided. Do the critics who accept these disclaimers at face value really think that any respectable woman reading the poem would now put it down as instructed? Of course not.” Sharrock, “Ovid and the Politics of Reading,” 110. For a different view of the identity of the love elegy’s *puella*, see James, *Learned Girls and Male Persuasion*, which argues that the elegist’s beloved is an independent courtesan.

81. Many passages in *Ars Amatoria* clearly refute Ovid’s declaration that his guide is not intended for married women or that it does not encourage adultery. See Dalzell, *The Criticism of Didactic Poetry*, 158.

82. *Ovidius ut roque lascivior*, says Quintilian (*Inst.* 10.1.93), comparing Ovid with Propertius and Tibullus.

83. Edmunds provides a different analysis of this term, based mainly on the ancient reception of the *Metamorphoses*. According to him, Quintilian and other Roman authors conceive of Ovid’s lasciviousness as an expression of a stylistic weakness—in this case the poet’s love of diversity in matters of genre and theme: see Edmunds, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Roman Poetry*, 52–59.

84. But Ovid has his own limitations. For example, he does not consider himself impudent or immune to shame. If indecency is evidenced in his erotic writing, it is certainly not on the level of the explicitly sexual or pornographic. Thus, the passage from *Remedia Amoris* that addresses his critics is actually a digression that occurs before Ovid commences a discussion on sexual aversion techniques. Ovid suggests that this discussion embarrasses him (*Rem.* 359–60): *Multa quidem ex illis pudor est mihi dicere; sed tu / Ingenio verbis concipe plura meis* (“About much of these, though, I am ashamed to speak; therefore, use your intelligence and imagine more than I say”).

CHAPTER 5. FEMININE SUBJECTIVITY AND THE SELF-CONTRADICTING TEXT

1. Karen Bassi explores the significance of the figure of Pandora for the palinode in “Helen and the Discourse of Denial in Stesichorus’ Palinode,” 51–75.

2. The first challenge to Ovid’s love elegy arises in the context of medieval poetry and, in particular, the poetry of Baudri of Bourgueil. Studies by Peter Dronke and Gerald A. Bond have shown that the medieval Ovidian tradition was in no way restricted to an allegorical form of thought. Assuming an Ovidian persona enabled Baudri to make a place for the erotic that was otherwise forbidden in legitimate literary writing. See Dronke, *Medieval Writers of the Middle Ages*, 84–139; Bond, “Composing Yourself,” 83–117; Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 42–69.

3. One can explain the relationship between Ovid’s erotodidactic works and the Latin love elegy by means of an analogy to the effect of Aristotle’s *Poetics* on Greek tragedy. Aristotle’s treatise attempts to capture, and hence permanently fix, the very essence of the tragic form. Such aspirations obstruct the generic flexibility necessary to the continuation of the tragic genre.

4. Conte, *Genres and Readers*, 47.

5. *Ibid.*, 46.

6. Alison Sharrock, in *Seduction and Repetition in Ovid's Ars Amatoria II*, specifically foregrounds the levels of seduction in Ovid's guides, finding various levels of readerships being generated by Ovid's writing. See also J. C. McKeown's 1989 commentary on *Amores* 2.1, in which Ovid explicitly stacks up different categories of reader for his elegies.

7. Ovid encourages his readers to write love letters in the style of *Heroides* (AA 1.437–58).

8. In *Amores* 3.8 Ovid demonstrates the poet's high prestige as a lover by means of a confrontation between *eques* and *poeta*. In Book 3 of *Ars Amatoria*, the figure of the poet is again thrust into competition with other professional men over who is the better lover. The varied professional options include the stereotypes of the wealthy man, the lawyer, and the rhetorician (AA 3.525–51).

9. For a discussion of sincerity see Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity*.

10. Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*, trans. Richard Howard, 3.

11. Veyne, *Roman Erotic Elegy* (1988), is a translation of *L'élégie érotique romaine*.

12. See, for example, Conte's chapter on Ovid's erotodidactic works in *Genres and Readers*, 35–66; Sharrock, "Ovid and the Discourses of Love," 150–62.

13. Ovid's amatory poetry has thus remained *levis*, "light." His self-description in *Amores* is no less responsible for imprinting the playful and insincere character of his amatory poetry (*Am.* 3.1.41–43): *sum levis, et mecum levis est, mea cura, / non sum mater ia fortior ipsa mea. / rustica sit sine me lascivi mater Amoris*. ("I am light, and Cupid, my poetic concern, is light as well; / I myself am not stronger than my own subject matter. / But, without me, the mother of lascivious Amor would be rustic").

14. Exceptional treatments of Ovid's didacticism are Downing, "Anti-Pygmalion," 235–51; Kennedy, "Bluff Your Way in Didactic," 159–76.

15. See Conte's critical response to Veyne's work on elegy: "But it is certainly extreme, and in the final analysis mistaken, to say that elegy 'is a plaything' (p. 124), 'a playful lie, that everything in it is a playful semblance without a trace of irony or harshness' (p. 98), that 'only one thing is lacking: emotion' (p. 44), that it is a 'playful paradox' (p. 206: if so, then just as all literature is)." Conte, *Genres and Readers*, 159 n. 19.

16. Consider, for example, A. S. Hollis's observation on the historically poor reputation of *Ars Amatoria*: "Until recently the *Ars Amatoria* has been more or less taboo, and conspicuously absent from school and university classical courses. As a result many literate non-specialists consider it a very naughty poem; they cannot be blamed for this opinion when professional scholars have thrown out such comments as 'shameless compendium of profligacy' or 'va de mecum in wantonness.'" In the early 1970s, Hollis's complaint about conservative readings was not entirely misplaced. Hollis, "The *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris*," 84.

See also Malcolm Heath's statement in "Hesiod's Didactic Poetry," 157–67, that "no one supposes that Ovid really wrote his poem in order to instruct the youth of Rome in that art" (158).

17. See Kenney, "*Nequitiae poeta*," 201–9; Leach, "Georgic Imagery in the *Ars Amatoria*," 142–54; Henderson, *P. Ovidi Nasonis Remedia Amoris*.

18. Dalzell, *The Criticism of Didactic Poetry*, 34, see also 132–64. For treatments of Ovid's amatory didactic poetry as "pseudo-didactic parodies" or as "didactic jokes," see for example A. S. Hollis, *Ovid: Ars Amatoria I*, xvi. Cf. Hollis, "The *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris*," 85; and Otis, *Ovid as an Epic Poet*, 18.

19. The dichotomy between the useful and the pleasurable is well attested—for example, in the demand for an absolute separation between *voluptas* and *honestas* raised by Cicero's didactic treatise *De Officiis* 3.119: *Nam ut utilitatem nullam esse docuimus, quae honestati esset contraria, sic omnem voluptatem dicimus honestati esse contrariam* ("I have taught that there is nothing useful in that which is contrary to the honorable, similarly I say that all pleasure is contrary to the honorable"). And see Seneca's *De Vita Beata* 7.3, which defines pleasure, in opposition to the sublime virtue, as something lowly (*humile*), servile (*servile*), weak (*imbecillum*), and perishable (*caducum*) that dwells in brothels and taverns.

20. One long-time controversy within Ovidian scholarship concerns the specific nature of Ovid's field of instruction: extramarital relationships and wanton loves. Do the love guides address the love affairs of married women, or of socially inferior unmarried ones—for example, courtesans? Either way, Ovid seems, by Roman standards, to have been dealing with a marginal, if not illicit, topic. Gordon Williams was the first to argue that the love elegy's women are of some social standing, and most probably married. See Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry*, 528, and, specifically on *Ars*, his *Change and Decline*, 52–101. Sharon James, in *Learned Girls and Male Persuasion*, returns to the identification of the elegiac women as prostitutes.

21. For the full reference to Cicero's view, see chapter 4, n. 77.

22. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire*, 191.

23. Conte, *Genres and Readers*, 65.

24. Conte, *ibid.*, 57, considers the view of *Remedia* as a form of palinode to be the most typical misunderstanding shared by Ovid's readers. And see Peter Green, who argues that Ovid's claim not to be writing a palinode (*Rem.* 11–12)—*nec te, blande puer, nec nostras prodimus artes, / nec nova praeteritum Musa retexit opus* ("I do not betray you nor my own arts; / this new Muse does not unroll my past work")—means that the expected his critical readers "to tag him with the 'palinode theory.'" In Green, "Commentary of Ovid," in *The Erotic Poems* (New York: Penguin, 1982), 403.

25. While Diotima constructs the metaphysical goal as the climax of the philosopher's erotic biography, that endpoint is governed by the same principle regulating the entire course of the lover's life. In this sense, Ovid is influenced by the

Platonic lover whose readiness to undertake the ultimate metaphysical stage is conditioned by his familiarity with the form of transcendence underlying a succession of erotic experiences delineated by the ladder of love. See Lev Kenaan, "Platonic Strategies in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris*."

26. This point may become clearer if we think of the uniqueness of Ovid's transformational narrative in contradistinction to the paradigmatic neo-Platonic, Christian narrative of conversion that we find, for example, in Augustine's *Confessions*. The *Confessions* is the narration of a self whose present becomes meaningful only through a critical review of the past—and specifically through a recognition of one's past as flawed. This happens once the transition from past to present is perceived to be a process of repair and mending of old ways. In this sense, the Augustinian biographical narrative assumes the form of an assertion—a moral assertion, primarily—of the present over, and against, the past. See Vered Lev Kenaan, "The Contribution of *Ars* and *Remedia* to the Development of Autobiographical Fiction."

27. Ovid is familiar with the traditional image of the seductive, modest maiden. An earlier textual example that explores the ambiguity and deception of the seductive virgin is the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, in which Aphrodite plays the part of a helpless maiden in order to seduce Anchises, since this image is appealing to men. Ann Bergren ties Aphrodite's disguise to the image of Pandora in particular and to feminine sexuality in general. See Bergren, "The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite," 1–41.

28. Freud, Letter to Marie Bonaparte, quoted in Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, 421. For a discussion of Freud's famous question, see Felman, *What Does a Woman Want?*

29. See J. H. Blok, "Sexual Asymmetry, 1–57; Lardinois and McClure, eds., *Making Silence Speak*, 3–16.

30. "For the feminine, the act of defloration represents a truly mysterious bond between end and beginning, between ceasing to be and entering upon real life. To experience maidenhood, womanhood, and nascent motherhood in one, and in this transformation to plumb the depths of her own existence: this is given only to woman, and only as long as it remains open to the archetypal background of life." Neuman, *Amor and Psyche*, 64.

31. The third option, which presents rape as the hidden aspiration of its victim, is a hackneyed time-worn male prejudice that can be traced back to Herodotus. Relating the Persian view of relations between the sexes, the historian mentions the kidnapping (that is, the rape) of the virgins Io, Europa, and Medea: "Up to this point it was only rape on both sides, one from the other; but from here on, say the Persians, the Greeks were greatly to blame. For the Greeks, say they, invaded Asia before ever the Persians invaded Europe: It is the work of unjust men, we think, to carry off women at all; but once they have been carried off, to take seriously the avenging of them is the part of fools, as it is the part of

sensible men to pay no heed to the matter: clearly, the women would not have been carried off had they no mind to be.” *The History* 1.4, trans. David Grene.

32. “The poem may be marking a change of identity or Kore’s acquisition of new powers as goddess of the underworld by using the name Persephone,” Helen P. Foley suggests: see her commentary and translation in *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 39.

33. In Greek mythology the nymphs represent elements of nature, such as rivers, springs, and forests. One of the definitions of the Greek word *nymph* is “virgin,” or, in other words, a girl ripe for marriage. In Latin, *nympha* is related to the verb *nubere*, “to marry.” For more on the role of the nymphs in Greek mythology see Dowden, *The Uses of Greek Mythology*, 126–29.

34. A comprehensive discussion of this subject can be found in Zeitlin, “The Dynamics of Misogyny,” and “The Politics of Eros in the Danaid Trilogy of Aeschylus,” both in her *Playing the Other*.

35. For a discussion of virginity from the perspective of ancient medicine, see the study by Aline Rousselle, who cites the passage from Hippocrates quoted above: Rousselle, *Porneia: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity*, 63–77.

36. *Ibid.*, 67.

37. Aeschylus, *The Suppliants*, trans. Janet Lembke; Dowden, *Death and the Maiden*, examines the concept of the death marriage in Greek mythology.

38. Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, trans. James Scully and C.J. Herington.

39. The mother-daughter intimacy serves only as a backdrop for the narrative’s main action, which is the break, or separation, that is forced upon both mother and daughter, and will ultimately compel both of them to repress their original relationship in favor of a new one. See also Catullus 62.20–25.

40. This is also the source of the traditional custom of carrying the bride over the threshold of the young couple’s home, symbolizing her abduction from her parents’ home. Plutarch anchors this custom in Roman culture and interprets it as a memorial gesture to the abduction of the Sabine women in ancient Rome. “And it continues to be the custom down to the present time that the bride shall not of herself cross the threshold into her new home, but be lifted up and carried in, because the Sabine women were carried in by force, and did not go in of their own accord.” Plutarch, *Romulus* 15.5, in *Plutarch’s Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin.

41. On the mother-daughter relationship see Foley, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 118–37.

42. Campbell, *Greek Lyric*, vol. 1, *Sappho and Alcaeus*.

43. Her narrative, for example, is not identical with the story we heard in the narrator’s first version. Thus, the poet describes in 370–72 how Hades gives her the pomegranate seed that guarantees her return to the underworld, while Persephone’s account at 411–413 provides a different emphasis: the husband forced her to eat the pomegranate seed against her will. She wants her mother to perceive her as an innocent and victimized virgin. See also Foley, *ibid.*, 130.

44. Foley writes in her commentary (ibid., 60): “In this passage Persephone acquires an articulate voice (beyond a cry for help) in the narrative for the first time; this may affirm that she has acquired an adult role and a partial independence from both Hades and her mother.”

45. Feminist readers see Persephone’s duplicity as a direct consequence of her dual role as daughter and wife: “For Irigaray, Persephone represents divided femininity only partially captured by patriarchy, a paradoxical being who is never alone, ‘immortally and never more a virgin but inhabits two mutually exclusive domains as her mother’s daughter as well as her husband’s wife. Hence, Persephone becomes an inscrutable, potentially deceptive figure, never fully known, who inhabits, insofar as she has a self, an ambiguous space between two powerful presences.” Foley, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 130.

46. The Ovidian Proserpina recalls an other feminine archetype, Semonides’ woman of the sea. Among the ten types of women, the sea woman is distinguished by her double nature; like the sea, she is tossed from calm to storminess and vice versa. This duplicity ties her to Persephone/Proserpina and in turn to Pandora. As Nicole Loraux writes: “With her affability and rage, the woman of the sea reminds us of the double nature of Pandora, made of deceitful seduction.” Loraux, *Children of Athena*, 91–92.

CHAPTER 6. PANDORA’S TEARS

1. For metaphors of weaving as text in the Greek and Roman world, see Scheid and Svenbro, *The Craft of Zeus*, 111–55.

2. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. In Hamilton and Cairns, eds., *Statesman*, 279b–277e. Plato employs the metaphor of weaving to explicate the principles of various activities, such as instruction in reading, the art of interpretation, and political activity.

3. Homer never presents his own poetry as an art (*technē*), and certainly not as weaving. See Finkelberg, *The Birth of Literary Fiction in Ancient Greece*, 70.

4. Bergren, “Language and the Female in Early Greek Thought,” 70–75; Snyder, “The Web of Song,” 194.

5. See Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition*, 117.

6. See Salzman-Mitchell, *A Web of Fantasies*.

7. The rhetorical significance of unweaving is also employed by Cicero (*Acad.* 2.95) and Virgil (*Aen.* 12.763).

8. Arachne provides Ovid with an image of an illegitimate artist. I will mention only a few interpretations of this much-discussed episode, focusing on Arachne’s weaving as standing in for Ovid’s poetics: Albrecht, *Roman Epic*, 153–65; Lev Kenaan, “Silent Images,” 186–89; Oliensis, “The Power of Image-Makers,” 285–322.

9. On Philomela’s weaving see Joplin, “The Voice of the Shuttle Is Ours,” 35–64; Marder, “Disarticulated Voices,” 148–66; Heffernan, *Museum of Words*, 47–93.

10. Hine, *Ovid's Heroines*.

11. Linda Kauffman writes: "Through such signs, the heroine transmits a part of herself, the corporeal, to the textual. . . . Tears thus indicate the disproportion between what is signified and the means of signifying. Throughout amorous discourse, the heroine glorifies her tears, her heart, her tongue, her body as authentic registers of her emotions. . . . Writing comes to signify her life's blood, illustrating her identification of her body with the text." Kauffman, *Discourses of Desire*, 36–37.

12. This theme became part of a long literary tradition in which the notion of a text takes on a bodily form and appears, typically in the context of love literature, as a personal object. Hence, the letter, the book, or the diary becomes an animate object that personifies the writer's suffering. In this context, we may briefly recall the interesting example of Boccaccio's Lady Fiammetta, who explicitly continues the Ovidian tradition, addressing her own book in the following manner: "O dear little book of mine, snatched from the near burial of your lady, here it is that your end has come more quickly than that of our misfortunes, as is my wish; therefore, just as you have been written by my own hand and in many places damaged by my tears, present yourself to women in love. . . . You should be glad to show yourself similar to my disposition, which is so very unhappy that it clothes you in misery, as it does me." Causa-Steindler and Mauch, eds. and trans., *The Elegy of Lady Fiammetta*, 156. Fiammetta's book is a container of tears and emotions. It is a mirror of her soul. At the same time, the work's plainly dressed and uncombed appearance reflects Lady Fiammetta's own body. The text is structured as a self, tied, as it is in Ovid, to Boccaccio's conception of the feminine nature of writing. For Boccaccio, the identification between a author and text is essentially feminine. In creating a protagonist who is a female writer, he is, in fact, creating a work that bears the character of its writer. I suggest that Boccaccio's debt to Ovid goes beyond generic form and even beyond the specific choice of writing under a feminine guise. In my view, the ingenuity of both Ovid and Boccaccio does not lie simply in creating sophisticated female personas but, rather, in acknowledging the feminine character of the text—any text.

13. Lev Kenaan, "Fabula Anilis," 370–91.

14. On plain weaving as opposed to figured weaving, see Heffernan, *Museum of Words*, 51.

15. The plain weaver symbolizes a conformist type of femininity that complies with gender constraints. Andromache in the *Iliad* (22.440–41) and Penelope in the *Odyssey* (19.141–56) are both nonrepresentational weavers whose weaving is metaphorically tied to their faithfulness as wives. Penelope's case is more interesting and illuminating, for while she is a cunning weaver, as the etymological pun on her name suggests, she nevertheless preserves the image of the ideal wife. She is not a mimetic artist; she is a plain weaver; and in this sense her artisanship in

itself does not make her an artist. On Penelope as a cunning weaver, see Felson-Rubin, “Penelope’s Perspective,” 163–83, esp. 167–68.

16. Trans. Mary Lefkowitz and Maureen Fant, *Women’s Life in Greece and Rome*, 17.

17. On Helen’s web see Bergren, “Helen’s Web,” 19–34; Zeitlin, “Travesties of Gender and Genre in Aristophanes’ *Thesmophoriazousae*” (1981), reprinted in *Playing the Other*, 409–11; Kennedy, “Helen’s Web Unraveled,” 5–14; Suzuki, *Metamorphoses of Helen*, 40–43.

18. In contrast to the Homeric verbal narrative, the weaver’s story is based on the visual image. The fact that Helen weaves her story in pictures is indicative of an essential difference between her and the Homeric narrator. Does the Homeric text imply that this difference is evidence of her limited authority as a narrator?

19. Sappho courageously reconstructed Helen’s lost perspective by presenting the latter’s unforgivable desertion in a new light in Fr. 16. Although Sappho follows the words that Homer puts in Helen’s mouth (*Il.* 3.171–76), her Helen deviates from the Homeric one in her unapologetic self-assurance. See the analysis of Fr. 16 by Page duBois in *Sappho Is Burning*, 98–126. Sappho articulates what Helen could not express openly and without shame in the Homeric epic. For duBois, Sappho’s reinterpretation establishes Helen “as subject, as a hero of her own time” (126).

20. All translations from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are by Richmond Lattimore.

21. Charles Segal makes a similar point in *Singers, Heroes, and Gods in the Odyssey* (125): “Even when she envisages the war as eventually part of a total heroic tradition, her primary interest is in what she is actually undergoing.” At the same time, Segal’s general distinction between aesthetic distance and emotional involvement in Homeric poetry does not take into account the relevance of gender difference.

22. On lamentation as a feminine genre, see Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*; Holst-Warhaft, *Women’s Laments and Greek Literature*; Stears, “Death Becomes Her,” 113–27; Murnaghan, “The Poetics of Loss in Greek Epic,” 203–20.

23. Foley, “Poetics of Tragic Lamentation,” 123.

24. For example, women mourn Patroclus in 19.301–2; Andromache mourns Hector in 22.477–514.

25. See, for example, Murnaghan, “The Poetics of Loss in Greek Epic,” 214: “In general, the concern of lamenting women for their own suffering means that they have no use for what concerns a warrior most.”

26. Her death wish is inspired by the death of Hector.

27. Achilles’ lament in 19.315–37 contains similar elements: (1) a death wish; (2) memories of his absent father and son; (3) self-pity. Achilles’ emotional response is followed by the elders’ lament for Patroclus, which is also dominated by a

personal perspective: “So he spoke, mourning, and the elders lamented around him / remembering each those he had left behind in his own halls” (*Il.* 19.338–39). Lamentations are, of course, not sung only by women. Yet precisely because of the tension between the personal and the public embodied in the form of a lament, I see it as a feminine modality. In this sense, we may say that masculine figures can also give voice to the feminine. Achilles’ response to the death of Patroclus, for instance, is a male lament of great emotional power, but it should be understood as feminine at heart. The feminine perspective is not limited to female figures.

28. Segal, *Singers, Heroes, and Gods in the Odyssey*, 127–28, discusses the divided audience for Phemius’s song but only briefly mentions Penelope’s response.

29. *Ibid.*, 130. On the epic’s creation of “a community of shared mourners,” see Greene, “The Natural Tears of Epic,” 189–202.

30. See Segal, *Singers, Heroes, and Gods in the Odyssey*, 130–31.

31. See Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic Poetry*, 164, 167–70, 182–83; Doherty, “Gender and Internal Audiences in the *Odyssey*,” 161–77.

32. Charles F. Ahern similarly argues that the feminine ethos is incorporated into the Homeric ethical framework. “Grieving, even if it is ‘womanly’ and therefore an object of suspicion, is an abiding, even a central feature in the psychological and ethical landscape of human experience. This the poet shows strikingly by ascribing it, in the specific form of comparison with a woman, to the two greatest of heroic figures. Womanly grief becomes heroic grief. That Odysseus and Achilles should then, in reflecting on their own grief and that of others, come each to see himself in decidedly ambivalent terms will testify to the high degree of moral complexity with which Homer has invested the world of heroic action.” Ahern, “Two Images of ‘Womanly Grief’ in Homer,” 22–23.

33. This intriguing simile has attracted the attention of many scholars, who have offered a variety of interpretations. See, for example, Mattes, *Odysseus bei den Phäaken*, 115–21; Podlecki, “Some Odyssean Similes,” 81–90; Foley, “Reverse Similes and Sex Roles in the *Odyssey*,” 7, 20; Lloyd, “Homer on Poetry,” 85–90.

34. Patroclus is compared to a sobbing baby girl in *Iliad* 16.6–10.

35. Interpreters have recently stressed the significance of this scene in illustrating the moral force of poetry. See, for example, Crotty, *The Poetics of Supplication*, 121–27. Segal’s comments on the psychological and ethical significance of the simile in this episode are valuable. See *Singers, Heroes, and Gods in the Odyssey*, 120–23, and specifically his remark on the Homeric aesthetic conception of empathetic identification (121): “The scene of Odysseus’ weeping, then, articulates two very different modes of response: the aesthetic distance of Alcinoos that can treat poetry (fiction) as a source of pure pleasure (*terpsis*), and the intense, painful involvement of Odysseus as he participates, through memory, in the sufferings that are the subject matter of the song.”

36. Odysseus's self-revelation has been appropriated in an interesting fashion by literary descriptions of Christian repentance. At the height of this tradition is Jean Valjean's religious moment of self-discovery in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. On the road, having betrayed the beneficent hospitality of the bishop and stolen a coin from a little boy, Valjean, like Odysseus, sees himself and weeps for the first time after nineteen years of exclusion from society: "Jean Valjean wept for a long time. He wept burning tears, he sobbed with more weakness than a woman, with more fright than a child" (ch.13, "Little Gervais"). One can see here the commonalities between the pagan conception of homecoming and the Christian conception of a return to God. Both involve self-revelation through an experience of becoming Other to oneself. Self-reflection produces contradictory feelings of estrangement and intimacy vis-à-vis oneself. In our context, this means recognizing one's feminine aspect. Odysseus's mode of listening provides a paradigmatic model for transformational narratives. The song intertwines Odysseus's distance from and proximity to home, his wandering and his homecoming, just as Jean Valjean's vision bridges his past estrangement from God and his present recognition of God. This revelatory experience is thematized in both cases by the image of the weeping woman.

37. Interpretations of this episode have focused on this moment of self-revelation by considering what the enslaved woman symbolizes. The body of the dead husband could symbolize Odysseus's heroic past. Her refusal to part from her husband stands for Odysseus as he is now, grieving for a present life that is bereft of significance. Segal, *Singers, Heroes, and Gods in the Odyssey*, 120–21, for instance, sees her as an instrument used by the Homeric narrator to extend the boundaries of the war beyond Odysseus's own private and personal experiences. According to Segal, Homer uses the image of the woman as a symbol of conquest and suffering in order to show how the song provides Odysseus with sources of inner strength that diverge from the safe perspective of the victor and enable him to experience suffering from a diametrically opposite perspective. The figure of the weeping woman can also be linked to Penelope: as Odysseus listens in tears to his own story, he can identify with his wife, who has been sustained only by rumors about him and who, like Odysseus now, is listening to songs about her absent husband. His tears enable him to experience her humiliation and the threats to her freedom, so that he will finally be able to complete his journey home. These varied interpretations show us that the confrontation between Odysseus as hero and Odysseus as witness to his own heroism bridges the gap between conflicting though coexisting aspects of Odysseus: conqueror versus conquered, self versus other, the self divided among different layers of time. These conflicting elements in Homeric poetry are most fully expressed in this confrontation between Odysseus's masculine and feminine aspects. See Lloyd, "Homer on Poetry," 85–90.

38. Karl Reinhardt connects the switch from third-person to first-person narrative to the "transformation from jesting and dreadful wonders to the personal experience of a hero of the *Iliad*." Reinhardt, "The Adventures in the Odyssey," 73.

39. In Hamilton and Cairns, eds., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*.
40. On the pejorative sense of feminine grief in Greek and Roman culture, see Loraux, *Mothers in Mourning*; Richlin, “Emotional Work,” 229–48.
41. Plutarch, *Moralia*, trans. Babbitt.
42. All translations from *Phaedo* are by R. Hackforth.
43. Adriana Cavarero, *In Spite of Plato*, 4.
44. *Ibid.*, 26.
45. *Ibid.*, 28.
46. *Ibid.*
47. See Loraux, *Mothers in Mourning*, 165.

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INDEX

- Abel, 66
 Accius, 117
 Achilles, 177–78, 218–19n27
 Achilles Tatius, 188
 Actaeon, 54
 Adam, 46, 83
 Aegisthus, 106
 Aeschylus: feminine power in trilogies of (Danaiids), 205n4; WORKS: *Agamemnon*, 105–6; *Prometheus Unbound*, 155–56; *Seven against Thebes*, 200n28; *Suppliants*, 201n6. *See also* Io
 Agamemnon, 105–6
 Agathon, 97–98
 Ahern, Charles F., 219n32
 Alcaeus, 208n47
 Alcibiades: beauty of, 204n41; flute girl's return and, 184; on shame, 185; on Socrates and Eros, 100–101; Socrates' appearance and, 97–99
 Alkmene, sons of, 65–66
 allegory, emergence of, 188
 Allen, R. E., 200n37
 alterity. *See* difference; Other and otherness
 ambiguities: of femininity, 150; of identity, 63–68; of jar (*pithos*), 88–89; of language, 131–32; of love elegy, 112–13; of meaning, disputes about, 199n24; of Pandora, 10–11, 19–20, 86–88; of truth, 51–52; of virgin, 214n27
Amores (Ovid): catalogue of authors in, 114, 115, 116–17; on female procurer (*lena*), 125; feminine source of inspiration for, 109–10, 114–15; Ovid's poetic development evidenced in, 115–16, 208n38; Ovid's self-description in, 212n13; on poet as lover, 212n8; prefatory epigram of, 207n37
 Amphitryon, sons of, 65–66
 Anacreon, 110, 114, 117, 118
 Ancona, Ronnie, 210n71
 Andromache, 217–18n15
 Antigone, 105
 Aphrodite: Eros and, 27–28, 101; femininity created by, 28–30; genealogy of, 25–27; as helpless maiden, 214n27; Ovid's visualization of, 136–37; Pandora's creation and, 17, 88; Philomeidea and, 27, 28; in *Works and Days*, 194n32. *See also* Venus
 Apollo, 109

- Apollodorus, 184
 apple as symbol, 158
 Apuleius, 193n5
 Arachne, 163
 Aratus, 117
 Archilochus, 121
 Ares, 173, 174
 Aristotle, 41, 142, 143, 211n3
Ars Amatoria (Ovid): absence from
 courses, 212n16; audience and ideal
 readers of, 127, 128–29, 210n79;
 catalogue of authors in, 114, 117–18;
 context of writing, 116–17; didactic
 value of, 138–40; figure of the
 female lover, 148–50; language
 privileged in, 133–34; palinodic
 structure of, 140–42, 143–45, 146; as
 part of transformative, cyclical nar-
 rative, 143–45, 160; performativity
 privileged in, 135–37; on poets and
 lovers, 212n8; *puella* figure in, 147;
 reference to comedy in, 207n35;
 Sappho's presence in, 120–21, 123,
 126; weaving metaphor in, 162–63;
 woman's perfect appearance in,
 147–48
 Aspasia, 123–25, 203n27, 209n67
 Athena, 33, 36–37, 87–88, 161
 Augustine, 214n26
 Augustus, 112, 206–7n23, 207n24
 autobiographical text, 167–68, 176

 Babel, Tower of, 196n1
 Bachelard, Gaston, 46
 Bakhtin, Mikhail, 11–13
 Barthes, Roland, 137–38
 Bassi, Karen, 211n1
 Baudri of Bourgueil, 211n2
 beauty: of Alcibiades, 204n41; evil
 linked to, 8–9, 32–33, 36–37, 87–88;
 of feminine and of universe, 39–40;
 as opaque and duplicitous, 146–47;
 Ovid's visualization of, 137;
 Roman standards of, 84–85; sense
 of terror and, 195n42; of Socrates'
 appearance, 99–100; Socrates'
 encounter with, 90–96; as source of
 danger, 37; transcendence implied
 in, 89–90; visibility of, 46–47
 Beauvoir, Simone de, 196–97n2
 Berger, Anne-Emmanuelle, 4
 Bergren, Ann L. T., 5, 196n52,
 214n27
 Bible. *See* Eden, Garden of; Genesis
 Boccaccio, Giovanni, 217n12
 body: language of, 204n46; of
 Socrates, 98–99, 125, 204n46,
 205n49; as source of charisma,
 98–99; textuality and femininity
 linked to, 162–65, 170, 185–86
 body and soul structure: Hesiod's
 conception of feminine in
 understanding of, 89–90; interior/
 exterior of Pandora as for shadow-
 ing, 146–47; Odysseus's tears and,
 175–76; Plato's view of, 180–83;
 Socrates' encounter with Theodote
 and, 91–96; Socrates' view of, 98–
 99; Xanthippe's voice in context of,
 182–85
 Bond, Gerald A., 211n2
 box, Pandora's. *See* Pandora's jar
 (*pithos*)
 Brown, A. S., 194n33

 Caecilius, 206n15
 Cain, 66
 Calame, Claude, 194n26
 Callimachus, 110, 114, 117, 118,
 127–28
 Calliope, 109
 Calvus, 125
 Calypso, 162
 Cantarella, Eva, 10

- Castor, 66
- Catullus, 125, 126, 127, 157, 206n15, 210n74
- Cavarero, Adriana, 8, 181–82, 183
- Ceto, 195n42
- Chaos, 24, 25
- Charmides, 204n48
- Christianity, 214n26, 220n36
- Cicero, 130, 138–39, 210n77, 213n19, 216n7
- classical canon: dichotomies of, 10, 12, 197n3; love elegy in, 116–17; Ovid's lists of, 114, 116–20, 125–27; Propertius's list of, 125–26, 127; Quintilian's list of, 210n73; rewriting of, 5–6; sexuality studied in, 201n2; woman and idea of text connected in, 13
- Cleiton, 91, 94
- Clio, 109–10
- Clitophon, 188
- clothing and appearance: eroticism and immorality linked to, 83–86; as opaque and duplicitous, 146–50; of Pandora, described, 33, 36–37, 87–88; Pandora's diadem and, 37, 42–43; Roman debate on, 202n21; of Theodote, 91–92, 203n32
- Clytemnestra, 105–6, 205nn4–5
- comedy and comic tradition: love narrative in, 143; mistaken identity theme in, 66–68; Ovid's catalogue of authors and, 116–18; Sappho's desire in, 121–22; subversive language in, 107–8
- Conte, Gian Biagio, 133, 139, 208n46, 212n15, 213n24
- contradiction: Aristotle on, 142, 143; in feminine subjectivity and meanings of rape, 151–60; feminine subjectivity linked to, 145–50; in interpretations of *eros*, 72–73; in Pandora's duality, 17–24, 31, 76–77, 81–82, 84, 85, 86–89, 95, 97, 144, 146–47, 158, 193n8, 202–3n24; of Persephone, 159–60; of simulation, 131–32. *See also* palinodic structure
- conversion narrative, 214n26
- cosmic unity concept, 40
- cosmological development: Aphrodite's role in, 25–26; cosmic unity concept and, 40; from darkness to illumination in, 45; divine genealogies and, 24–25, 31–32, 58; Eros's role in, 25; erotic and visible in, 29–30; hierarchy of gods in, 24–25; Pandora's role in, 17, 30–31, 37–38
- cosmological epic, 20. *See also* *Theogony* (Hesiod)
- cosmos/universe: creation accounts, compared, 39–40; erotic structure of, 27–29; Pandora as image of, 18–19. *See also* physical/sensual/sensible world (world of phenomena)
- Crito, 183, 184
- Critobulus, 209n67
- culinary metaphor, 127–28
- Cynthia, 210n72
- daimon*, 100–101
- Dalzell, Alexander, 128, 210n79
- Danaos, daughters of, 152, 154–55
- Daphne, 152–53
- Day, Archibald A., 203n30
- death, 155, 179. *See also* lamentation; tears and crying
- Demeter, 151–52, 157, 158, 159
- Demodocus, 173–75
- Denniston, J. D., 106
- Derrida, Jacques, 20, 51–52, 197–98n11
- desire: absence and, 63–68; for over-coming inherent difference, 71–73;

- desire (*continued*)
 Sappho's arousal of, 121–25; as textual phenomenon, 133–34; of unattainable object, 62–63, 92–93.
 See also *eros*; male desire
- Deucalion, 187–88
- dialogic relationships: Aphrodite's responsibility for, 29–30; Pandora as first woman and, 18–19; possibilities of, in poetry, 73–75
- Diana, 152
- didactic epic: cosmological epic compared with, 20; dressed woman in, 86; dual appearance of femininity in, 76–77; Hesiod's invention of, 50–56; “I” and “Other” fundamental to, 65; ideal audience of, 78–81; learning about Other in, 73–75; love elegy distinguished from, 109–10, 115, 118–19; marriage and, 79–80; misogyny of, 81–82; philosophical text compared with, 77; subjectivity abandoned for, 132–40. *See also* marriage; *Works and Days* (Hesiod)
- Dido, 143, 208n45
- difference: Derridean notion of, 20, 51–52, 197–98n11; desire to overcome, 71–73; as feminine, 49, 73–74, 196–97n2; inherent in humanity, 63–75, 80–81; marriage and, 80–81; myth of identities and, 63–68, 70–73; sameness linked to, 49, 67–68; use of term, 197–98n11. *See also* Other and otherness; sameness
- Diotima: on Eros as *daimon*, 100–101; erotic vocabulary of, 125; on intellectual vs. physical spheres, xi; meanings of name, 203n29; mentioned, 45; misuse of, 181; Pandora compared with, 23–24; patroness of, 124–25; Sappho's name linked to, 123–24; sensual dimension of text and, x; Socrates' encounter with, 90; transcendence and, 19, 144
- Doherty, Lillian, 6
- doppelgänger, 67
- drone (bee) simile, 34–35, 36
- Dronke, Peter, 211n2
- duBois, Page: on difference, 49; on Helen, 5; on Hesiod, 22–23; on inscription metaphor, 201n6; on Medea, 197n5; on Sappho, 121, 218n19
- Echo, 4
- Eden, Garden of, 46, 82–83, 198–99n17
- Edmunds, L., 211n83
- Edwards, Anthony, 65
- effeminacy: of love elegy, 109–14; of Propertius, 113–14, 206n17; in Roman culture, 209n21
- emotions: censorship of, 177–79; community solidarity vs. personal in, 172; genuine vs. simulated, 132; tension of rationality with, 184–86; as textual phenomenon, 133–40. *See also* lamentation; love; tears and crying
- Ennius, 117
- Ephialtes, 66
- Epimetheus, 48–49, 65, 192n4
- epiphany, 44, 45
- Er, 19
- Erasmus of Rotterdam, 12–13
- Erichthonios, 192n4, 196n56
- Eris, 199n24
- Eros: as emotive force, 27–28; genealogy of, 68–73, 101; Himeros compared with, 194n25; Pandora as embodiment of, 23–24, 32, 125, 131; Pandora's creation and, 40; powers of, 24–25; Sappho as teacher of,

121–25; Socrates linked to, 100–102, 125; in *Theogony*, 24–31; visibility and, 46

eros: contradictions and interpretations of, 72–73; the erotic and, 23–24, 27, 29–30, 32; feminine and poetry linked to, 131–32; femininity as regulating, 89–90; hunting metaphors and, 203–4n36; love poets' authority on, 109–10; luck (*tuche*) in, 95; marriage as an antidote to, 82; Pandora's language as manifestation of, 103–5; poetics of, 77; rehabilitation and transformation of, 90; rhetorical stages in, 134–35; Socrates as student and teacher of, 90–96, 100–102; theory of, 63, 68–73, 74

erotodidactic tradition: as anti-institutional, 139; cyclical (re)reading of, 144–45; as feminine, 127; ideal readers of, 128–29; instruction's goals in, 140–42; Ovid's response to critics of, 129–30; Ovid's understanding of, 114–20; Pandora's presence in, 131–32; Sappho's presence in, 120, 123–25; systematic approach to, 132–40. *See also* palinodic structure

Esau, 66

Eteocles, 200n28

Euripides, 197n5

Europa, 152, 214–15n31

Eve, ix–x, 46, 83

evil: beauty linked to, 8–9, 32–33, 36–37, 87–88; Pandora liberated from stigma of, 100–102; signification of, in gaze, 33–36

fall, myths of, 56, 57. *See also* Eden, Garden of

Farrel, Joseph, 120

feminina auctor and *feminina*

auctoritas: Catullus's submission of poetry to, 126; fictional persona of, 120; norms broken by, 129; power and independence and, 106; sex handbooks and, 209n63. *See also* feminine voice (*vox feminina*)

feminine: absent presence of, 184–86; ambivalence toward, 176–77; beauty of, 39–40; clothing linked to, 84; derogatory tropes of, 104; as difference, 49, 73–74, 196–97n2; *eros* and poetry linked to, 131–32; erotic integrated into, 27–29; erotodidactic poetry as, 127; listening and, 170–73; love as power of, 125; marginalization of, 166–67; as marker of inferior, 178–79, 181–82; meanings of, 35–36; as mediating force, 175–76; as metaphor for two textual layers, 76–77; norms broken by, 129; repetition in, 4; the sensible in relation to, 24; taming of, 80–81; text's intersection with, 109–14, 187–89; *Theogony* as eulogy of, 31; visibility as mark of, 36

feminine dimension of text: ancient literary criticism and, 187–88; bodily presence in, 170, 185–86; concepts underlying, 4–8, 140; contributions of, 188–89; Homeric poetry as recognizing, 173–76; mediating force in, 175–76; personal element in, 172–73, 217n12; weaving linked to, 161–65

feminine subjectivity: contradiction linked to, 145–50; origin of, 150–60; Sappho as exemplar, 5

feminine voice (*vox feminina*): in comic tradition, 107–8; emergent at moment of rape, 151, 158–60; exclusion of, 182–85; as illegitimate,

- feminine voice (*continued*)
 103–5, 109; as marker of lower faculties, 178; Ovid's adaptation and dubbing of, 120–23; as provocative and transgressive, 103–5, 131–32; signs of, 145–46; silencing of, 106–7; as subversive, 105–6, 107–8; weaving accompanied by, 162; woven text as overcoming lost, 163–65. See also *feminina auctor* and *feminina auctoritas*; lamentation
- femininity: ambiguities of, 150;
 Aphrodite's creation of, 28–30; culture's internal conflicts reflected in, 49; dialectical nature of, 111; dual appearance of, 76–77; erotic interaction regulated by, 89–90; irresolvable tension of, 9; maternal aspect of, 194n29; myth of love's origin and, 125; as Ovid's source of inspiration, 110–11; Pandora's archetype of, 17, 21–22; poetry and mystery of meaning linked in, 10, 176–77; "riddle" of, ix–xi, 8–10; Sappho as transgressing, 121–22; sexuality and visibility linked to, 29–31; textuality and body linked to, 162–65, 170
- Finley, Moses, 198–99n17
- Five Ages myth, 56–57, 59–63, 199n18, 199n20
- Foley, Helen P., 158, 215n32, 216n44
- fraternal relationships, 64–68
- Freud, Sigmund, ix, 8, 150
- Gaia (Mother Earth), 24, 25–26, 28, 38, 43, 194n29
- Gallop, Jane, 8
- Gallus, 110, 114, 117, 118, 125
- gaze: evil signified in, 33–36; female replaced by male, 126; of gods, as light source, 45; of Medusa, 132; methodological distancing of, 133; possibility of cosmic unity in, 40; of sensual world, 23–24; shame in response to, 185; Theodote as object of, 90–96; wonder evoked in, 36–37. See also visibility
- gender: ambivalence about, 112–13; male identity and autochthony, 192n4, 196n56; mankind's origin and autochthony, 22; masculine/feminine opposition in antiquity, 49; masculine interpretation of, 188–89; naked vs. clothed bodies and, 84; Pandora's creation and myth of autochthony, 46; subversion of conventions of, 105–6; textuality and (*auctor* and *auctoritas*), 106, 170, 205n7
- gender difference: interpretation's role in, 187–88; in masculine vs. feminine listening, 170–73; Pandora's beauty as instantiation of, 47
- gender studies: intertextuality intersected with, 4–5; lacuna addressed in, 197n3; political implications of, 7–8; of Roman love elegy, 206n18
- Genesis, 39, 82–83
- Gibson, Roy, 117
- gift and giving: of enlightenment, 46–47; Pandora as, 48–49, 87, 88, 97; Socrates as, 96–98; Theodote as, 91
- Golden Age: genealogy of, 24–25, 31–32, 58; kingdom in, 62–63; myths about twins linked to, 68; symbiosis of men with gods in, 56–59
- Goldhill, Simon, 203n29
- Graiae, 195n42
- Gray, Vivienne J., 203n31
- Green, Peter, 213n24

- Griffin, Jasper, 206n17
 Griffith, Mark, 201n5
 Gutzwiller, Kathryn J., 197n3
- Hades, 154
 Hallett, Judith, 206–7n23
 Halperin, David, 205n53, 209n65
 Hamilton, Richard, 85
 Hardie, Philip, 207n36
 Harpies, 195n42
 Heath, Malcolm, 213n16
 Hecate, 194n29
 Hector, 168–70
 Helen of Troy: defamation of, 132;
 lament of, 168–70; Pandora
 compared with, 18; released from
 paternalistic constructions, 5;
 Sappho's reconstruction of, 218n19;
 weaving of, 6, 166–68, 170
 Helicon, Mount, 50–53
 Henderson, A. A. R., 208n44
 Hephaestus, 43, 87–88, 192n4
 Herakles, 65–66
 Hermes, 88, 103, 146
 Herodotus, 214–15n31
 Hesiod: disruption in style of, 32;
 divine vs. human poetry, 52–56;
 entangled perspective of, 34–36;
 fraternal relationship of, 65; on
 ideal woman and marriage, 77–78;
 on Muses and truth, 197–98n11; on
 nature of women, 42, 89–90; in
 Ovid's catalogue of authors, 117;
 poetic authority of, 54–56, 198n14;
 poetics of, development, 10, 44–45,
 50–56; refusal to leave farm, 201n3;
 WORKS: *Shield of Herakles*, 65–66.
 See also Hesiodic Pandora;
 Theogony (Hesiod); *Works and
 Days* (Hesiod)
 Hesiodic Catalogue of Women, 6–7,
 192n3
- Hesiodic Pandora: beasts on diadem
 of, 37, 42–43; bridal costume of, 86;
 cosmic unity concept and, 40;
 duality (contradiction) of, 17–24,
 31, 76–77, 81–82, 84, 85, 86–89, 95,
 97, 144, 146–47, 158, 193n8, 202–
 3n24; as embodiment of Eros,
 23–24, 32, 131; enlightenment of,
 44–47; etiological nature of, 73–74;
 genealogy of, 24–31, 101; as jar,
 88–89, 203n26; jar (*pithos*) of, 12–13;
 misogynist responses to, 31–36,
 194–95n36; naked maiden
 juxtaposed to, 85–86; origin of
 language linked to, 103; otherness
 of, 48–50; in Plautus, 108; radiance
 and illumination of, 41–42, 44,
 46–47; in Socratic context, 90–91;
 structural role of, 37–38; theme of
 fall in, 56; traits associated with,
 8–10; voice of, 103–5, 107–8; wonder
 evoked by, 36–37
 heterosexuality, 70–71
 Himeros, 27–28, 194n25
 Hippocratic corpus, 153–54
 Hippolytus, 164
 Hollis, A. S., 212n16
 Holzhausen, Jens, 194–95n36
 home and household: *kratos* and
 conflict over, 106–7; public and
 private space in, 170–72; redefined
 in *Works and Days*, 63; return to,
 responsibility and nostalgia linked
 to, 62–63
 Homer: emotional responses
 described by, 172; feminine and
 poetry linked by, 176–77, 219n32;
 in Ovid's catalogue of authors,
 117; rereading of, from Helen's
 perspective, 5; visible force of *charis*
 and, 195n47; weaving metaphor of,
 6, 162, 166–68, 170, 217–18n15;

- Homer (*continued*)
 WORKS: *Iliad*, 6, 166–70, 173, 176;
Odyssey, 6, 106–7, 162, 170–73,
 175–76, 217–18n15
Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite, 152, 154,
 157, 158, 214n27
 homoeroticism: corrected version of,
 126; loss of sameness and, 70–71; of
 Socrates and Sappho, 124
homoia (similar, same, identical),
 connotations of, 51–52, 54–55
homoios, definition of, 64
 Horace, 122, 208n47, 210n71, 210n77
 Hugo, Victor, 220n36
 hysteria, 153–54
- intertextuality, 4–5, 11–13
 intratextuality, 11
 Io, 152, 155–57, 159, 214–15n31
 Iphigenia, 106
 Iphikles, 65–66
 Iphimedeia, sons of, 66
 Irigaray, L., 216n45
 Iris, 41–42
 Iron Age, 59, 60, 61, 73
 Ischomachus: as ideal husband, 79–
 80, 202nn12–13; on natural/naked
 vs. artifact/clothed woman, 81–86;
 as Xenophon's alter ego, 81, 202n15
- Jacob, 66
 James, Sharon L., 205–6n12, 211n80
 Jupiter, 123, 149
- Kauffman, Linda, 217n11
 Kanaan, Hagi, 161
 Kennedy, Duncan F., 110, 112, 138
 knowledge and learning: of farming,
 55, 61, 74; of otherness, 73–75;
 sources of, 96
 Kofman, Sarah, 8
 Koning, Hugo, 205n50
- Konstan, David, 201n2
kratos (power and authority), 105–7
 Kristeva, Julia, 11–13
 Kronos, 25–27, 28, 31–32, 38, 44
- Lacan, Jacques, 113
 lamentation: elements of, 218–19n27;
 as feminine genre in public/male
 domain, 168–70, 218n22; men's
 use of, 173–76, 184; poetic
 representation linked to, 176–78
 language: as condition for emotions,
 133–40; metadiscourse and, 132–40;
 Pandora as myth about origin of,
 76–77, 103, 196n1; as simulation,
 131–32; textile linked to, 161–62;
 Xenophon's ideal of, 82. *See also*
 names and naming; poetry and
 language of poetry; rhetoric
lascivia: of Catullus, 126; context of,
 104; of Ovid, 120–24, 129, 211n83;
 of Sappho, 120–23, 126, 129; of text,
 125–30
 law of noncontradiction, 142, 143
 Leda, sons of, 66
 Lefkowitz, Mary R., 10
 Lesbia, 126
 Leucippe, 188
levitas: context of, 104; of Ovid, 129,
 212n13
licentia, implications of, 129–30
 light sources, 41
 Littau, Karin, 196n1
 Longus, 201n39
 Loraux, Nicole: on autochthony,
 192n4, 196n56; on Hesiodic
 Pandora, 22, 193n8; on men as
 individuals, 196n59; on men vs.
 gods, 197n4; on sea woman, 216n46;
 on Socrates' body, 99, 204n46,
 205n49; on woman as epitome of
 difference, 49

- love: author and reader in, 134–35; in comic and tragic traditions, 143; as current vs. past experience, 141; deceit in, 137; deterministic belief in, 72; Diotima's view of, 23–24; myth of origin of, 125; Ovid's view of, 135–36; possible narratives of, 142–45; Socratic view of, 124; teachers of, 121–25, 135, 137, 213n20; as textual phenomenon, 111–12, 133–40; woman's actively passive role in, 148–50. *See also* desire; *eros*; Roman love elegy
- love poets: as authorities on *eros*, 109–10; as counter-cultural, 206–7n23; erotodidactic persona of, 114–20; illegitimate voice and, 127, 129–30; as lovers, 135, 212n8; medieval, 211n2; Ovid's list of, 117–18; Ovid's self-presentation as, 114–16; Sappho as, 122–24; terms for, 110
- Lucretius, 117, 138, 139, 148
- male desire: awakening of, 46–47; Freud on, ix; Theodote's effect on, 92–95; woman as object of, and female identity, 157–60
- marriage: analogy of didactic text and, 79–80; as cure for hysteria, 153–54; death identified with, 155; *eros* split from, 82–83; ideal woman for, 77–81, 165–66, 217–18n15; poetry about, 157–58; resistance to, 152–53, 154–55; Roman customs in, 215n40. *See also* rape
- Mars, sons of, 66
- Marsilio, Maria S., 200n25
- Marsyas, 101
- masculine: art interpreted via, 188–89; *mythos* and, 107; nakedness linked to, 84; as sameness, 196–97n2; Sappho linked to, 122–23
- masculinity: effeminacy and, 111, 113–14; feminine difference from, 73–74; ideal wife's familiarity with, 202n12; personification of, 173, 174; as sameness, 196–97n2
- Maximus of Tyre, 124–25
- McClure, Laura K., 203n27, 203n28
- McKeown, J. C., 212n6
- mechane* (contrivance), 95–96
- Medea, 105, 197n5, 208n45, 214–15n31
- Medusa, 132
- men: anxieties of, 103, 106; as author in love relationship, 134–35; autochthonous origin of, 22; censorship of tears of, 177–79; Freudian question about, 150; humans as only, 48–49; as husbands/educators, 78–86; as individuals, 196n59; Pandora as delight for, 87–88; symbiosis between gods and, 56–59; symbiosis between world and, 59–63; woman as separating gods from, 197n4
- Menander, 114, 117, 118, 207n35
- Metamorphoses* (Ovid): archetypal feminine biography in, 160; on difference, 187–88; Muse as whore and goddess in, 206n14; role of feminine voice in, 104; secondary naming in, 3–4; style of, 210n79; weaving metaphor in, 163–65
- Micheline, Ann Norris, 197n3
- Miller, Paul Allen, 112–14
- mimesis: imitation and, 21–23; poetic representation and, 177–78; theory of, 51–52
- Minerva, 163
- misogynism: dismantling of, 9, 189; elements of, 21–22; Pandora as origin myth of, 194–95n36; in Plautine version of Pandora, 108; in poetics of marriage, 81–82; in

- misogynism (*continued*)
 responses to Pandora's creation, 31–36; woman's appearance and, 146–50
- Mnemosyne, 53
- mollis* (soft) character: as derogatory, 113; Ovid's move from, 127; of Propertius, 109, 110, 111
- motherhood and maternity, x–xi, 21–22, 28
- Murnaghan, S., 218n25
- musa proterva*, context of, 104
- Muses: ambiguity of, 20; Hesiod and, 197–98n11, 198n16; in Hesiod's *Theogony*, 44–45, 50–52, 54, 162, 198n14; of Horace, 210n71; as invisible, 45; of Ovid, 130; as poetic inspiration, 8; *puella* figure as, 109, 205–6n12; Sappho as, 126; secularization of, 206n13; temporality transcended by, 52–53; truth and lies of, 51–52
- Myerowitz, Molly, 138
- mythology: feminist rewriting of, 7–8; foundational types of, 41–42; love and violence in, 149–50; nymphs in, 215n33; rape and female voice in, 151–60
- mythos*, 107. *See also* poetry and language of poetry
- names and naming: concretization of world and, 28; as narratological function, 3–4; rape as justifying woman's, 152, 159; release of, from previous interpretations, 4–5; visibility of Pandora and, 36; woman given first, among humans, 50
- Narcissus, 4
- Nereids, 195n42
- Neuman, E., 214n30
- nostos*, didactic version of, 62–63
- nudity, 83–86
- Nussbaum, Martha C., 98–99, 139, 204n47
- nymphs, 153, 215n33
- Oceanids, 195n42
- Odysseus: homecoming of, 62–63, 171; naming of, 3; tears of, 173–76
- Olympians: birth of, 24–25, 31–32; Titans' battle with, 38, 44. *See also* Golden Age
- Oppian law (195 BCE), 202n21
- Other and otherness: of audience, 65; desire to become one with, 72–73; in fraternal relationships, 64–68; learning about, 73–75; masculine sameness juxtaposed to feminine, 196–97n2; Medea as epitome of, 197n5; Odysseus as, 175–76; Pandora as, 48–50, 73–74; poetics of, 50–56; taming (and recognition) of, 80–81; woman's text as, 120. *See also* difference; sameness
- Otos, 66
- Ovid: approach to, 104; authorial reassurances of, 140–42; authors catalogued by, 114, 115–20, 125–27; erotic limits of, 211n84; eroto-didactic persona of, 114–20, 127; feminine authority usurped by, 110–11; feminine voice and, 4, 8, 120–23; figures of readers, 115–16; freedom of expression in, 127, 129–30; influences on, 109–11, 138–39; *lascivia* of, 120–24, 129, 211n83; love guides and, 132–40, 143–45, 160; love guides and circular narrative, 143–45, 160; masculine creation concept and, 123; medieval tradition influenced by, 211n2; *musa proterva* and, 129, 130, 131; on myth of first man and woman, 187–88; patroness

- of, 124–25; Pygmalion narrative of, 206n19; relationship with Virgil, 119; response to critics, 129–30; Sappho's erotodidactic authority over, 123–24; self-understanding of, 114–20; on simulation, 136–37; teacher of love figure and, 121–25, 135, 137, 213n20; *tener* used by, 206n15; WORKS: *Heroides*, 120–23; *Tristia*, 123, 206n15. See also *Amores* (Ovid); *Ars Amatoria* (Ovid); *Metamorphoses* (Ovid); *Remedia Amoris* (Ovid)
- Page, D., 106
- Palaestrio, 108
- palinodic structure: in *Ars* and *Remedia*, 140–45; Pandora and, 211n1; Plato on, 132
- Palladas of Alexandria, 195n45
- Pandora: ambiguity and complexity of, 10–11, 19–20, 86–88; ancient reception of, 192n4; beasts linked to, 37, 42–43; as deceptive seducer and as virginal bride, 77; Erichthonios compared with, 196n56; *eros* and, 35–36; gift of enlightenment for humanity, 46–47; as misogynist cultural symptom, 9; as misogyny's origin myth, 194–95n36; palinode and, 211n1; as patroness of teachers of love, 124–25; Penelope compared with, 18, 63; releasing name of, 4–5; role in creation of humanity, 17, 21; seductions of, 86–90; Socrates compared with, 101–2; as textual principle, 10–13, 189; of virgins, 214n27; as weaver, 161, 164; as work of art, *techne*, 34–35, 36, 49, 82, 161. See also Hesiodic Pandora; Pandora as first woman; Socratic Pandora
- Pandora as first woman: active dimension of, 89; as artifact, 82; as calamity, 200n38; constructive dimension of, 23–24; cosmic unity concept and, 40; dialogic relationship and, 18–19; as feminine Other, 48–50, 73–74; misogynist responses to, 31–36; as origin of deceit, 146–47; as patroness of teachers of love, 125; role model for, 28–30; structural role of, 37–38; wonder evoked by, 36–37
- Pandora's jar (*pithos*): box substituted for, 12–13; Pandora as, 88–89, 203n26
- Panofsky, Dora, 12–13, 18
- Panofsky, Erwin, 12–13, 18
- pantomime, 208n44
- Parker, Holt N., 209n63
- Parrhasius, 91, 93–94
- Patroclus, 218–19n27, 219n34
- Paul (biblical), 103
- Pausanias, 192n4
- Peitho, 88
- Penelope: Pandora compared with, 18, 63; silencing of, 106–7; Socrates' allusion to, 180–81; tears of, 170–73; weaving and reweaving of, 181, 217–18n15
- performativity, in Ovid's works, 135–37, 146
- Pericles, 203n27
- Persephone: feminist readers on, 216n45; paradox of, 159–60; power in virginal life of, 154; rape and female voice of, 151–52, 157, 158–59
- Perses, 65, 78, 201n5
- Phaeacia, island of, 62–63, 173–76
- Phaedra, 105, 143, 164–65
- Phaon, 120, 121, 122
- phenomena. See physical/sensual/sensible world (world of phenomena)

- Philetus, 110, 114, 117, 118, 127–28
 Philocomasium, 108
 Philomela, 163–64, 188
 philosophers: exclusions of, 182–85;
 linear paradigm of, 6–7, 181; as
 source of Socrates' erotic
 knowledge, 96
 philosophical text, 41–42, 77. *See also*
 eros; knowledge and learning
 Phoebus, 109–10
 physical/sensual/sensible world
 (world of phenomena): battles in
 development of, 38; changing
 human relationship to, 73–74;
 concretization of, 27–28; femininity,
 sexuality, and visibility linked to,
 29–31; as giving mother vs. stingy
 father, 60–61; Helen's articulation
 of, 167–68; human gaze directed
 to, 23–24, 41–42; ideal wife's
 characteristics and, 80–81; language
 applied to, 161–62; men's seeing of
 and separation from, 46–47;
 Pandora's embodiment of, 17–18;
 symbiosis of men with, 59–63. *See also*
 cosmos/universe
 pictorial vs. literary text, 217–18n15,
 218n18
 Plato: on *anamnesis*, 72; censorship
 of tears and crying, 177–79;
 deconstruction of, 8; on *eros*, 28, 63,
 68–73, 74; exclusions of, 181–85;
 genealogy of Eros adapted by, 101;
 on *himeros*, 28; on Homer, 177;
 language of body used by, 204n46;
 masculine creation concept of, 123;
 on mimesis, 51–52; on palinode, 132;
 Pandora liberated from evil stigma
 by, 100–102; on properly balanced
 poetry, 178; on reproductions,
 198n13; on seeing and wonder, 41–
 42; Socrates' body and, 98–99, 125;
 spherical creatures and, 69–72;
 on *Theogony*, 204n39; weaving
 metaphor of, 216n2; *WORKS*:
 Apology, 96–97; *Cratylus*, 28, 161–62;
 Gorgias, 99; *Ion*, 198n13; *Phaedo*, 99,
 179–80, 184–86, 204n46; *Phaedrus*,
 7, 124, 132; *Republic*, 177, 187;
 Timaeus, 39, 41. *See also* Socrates of
 Plato; *Symposium* (Plato)
 Plautus: on feminine beauty, 84–85;
 on Sappho's desire, 121; slave's
 comic effect used by, 107–8;
 version of Pandora by, 108; *WORKS*:
 Amphitryon, 67; *Menaechmi*, 67–68;
 Miles Gloriosus, 108, 121
 Plutarch, 178–79, 215n40
 poetics: of effeminate text, 111–13; of
 eros, 77; of marriage, 77, 78–81,
 81–82; of Other and otherness,
 50–56
 poetry and language of poetry:
 analogy between Pandora and,
 20–21, 76–77; desire aroused by,
 62–63; dialogic possibilities of,
 73–75; divine and human, distin-
 guished, 50–56; dual effects of, 202–
 3n24; eros and feminine linked to,
 131–32; femininity and mystery of
 meaning linked in, 10, 176–77; as
 masculine activity, 107; masculine
 vs. feminine listening to, 170–73; as
 moral force, 219n35; Pandora's
 image of, 202–3n24; Plato on proper
 balance in, 178; temporality's
 relationship with, 52–53, 198n16
 Pollitt, J. J., 203n31
 Pollux, 66
 Polynices, 200n28
 polyphony, 43–44. *See also* Babel,
 Tower of
 Pomeroy, Sarah B., 201n9, 202n15
 Porphyrio, 122–23

- Poseidon, sons of, 66
- Prier, Raymond Adolph, 195n46, 195n47
- Prometheus: attempt to help
 mankind, 17, 194–95n36; fraternal
 relationship of, 65; Io's voice and,
 155–56; Pandora in context of, 19–
 20; Zeus's relationship with,
 31–32, 38
- Propertius: allusion to Sappho,
 210n72; authors catalogued by,
 125–26, 127; effeminacy of, 113–14,
 206n17; feminine inspiration for,
 109; gender ambivalence used by,
 112–13; Ovid and, 110, 111; in Ovid's
 catalogue of authors, 114, 117, 118; as
 tener, 206n15
- Proserpina, 160
- proterva* and *protervitas*, 129, 130, 131
- Psyche, 13, 152
- Pucci, Pietro, 10, 20–21, 51–52, 201n7
- puella* figure: as Muse, 109, 205–6n12;
 Ovid's lists of reading for, 114,
 116–20; two versions of, 147
- Pyrrha, 187–88
- Quintilian, 127–28, 129, 210n73, 211n83
- rainbow phenomena, 41
- rape: as bridge to psychic development,
 157–58; as cure for hysteria, 153–54;
 as destructive and as formative,
 151–52; feminine subjectivity and,
 150–60; mythical tradition equating
 love with, 149–50; response to
 painting of, 188; weaving text of,
 163–65
- rationality: linear paths of, 6–7, 181;
 silence and, 131; tension of emo-
 tions with, 184–86
- reading: audience response in drama
 in, 172; emotional responses and,
 173–76; female lover as reader,
 134–35; as feminine form of listen-
 ing, 170–73; feminine readership,
 170–73; ideal wife as, 77–81; inter-
 textual, 11–13; listening and, 170–73;
 lovesick readers, 118, 208n44;
 political implications of, 7–8;
 Quintilian's reading response, 127–
 29; reader as Other, 65; reader's
 tears, 185–86; as transformational,
 cyclical, 144–45; of women in love
 relationship, 134–35
- Reeder, Ellen D., 10, 192n4
- Reinhardt, Karl, 220n38
- Remedia Amoris* (Ovid): catalogue of
 authors in, 114, 118–19; didactic
 value of, 138–40; erotic limits in,
 211n84; ideal readers of, 128–29;
 language privileged in, 133–34; as
 last love elegy, 119, 208n46; on love
 poets (*teneri poetae*), 110; on Ovid's
 critics, 129–30; palinodic structure
 of, 140–42, 143–45, 146; as part of
 transformative, cyclical narrative,
 143–45, 160; performativity
 privileged in, 135–37; *puella* figure
 in, 147; Sappho's presence in,
 120–21, 123; on simulative
 capacities, 136–37; on Virgil, 119;
 weaving metaphor in, 162–63
- Remus, 66
- retexo*, 163
- Rhea (vestal priestess), 66
- Rhea (Zeus's mother), 38
- rhetoric: misogynist remark as
 strategy in, 32–33; Pandora æ
 marking emergence of, 21; Pandora
 as master of, 103–5; of unweaving,
 216n7
- Richlin, Amy, 7
- Robinson, T. M., 204n47
- Roman love elegy: death of genre,
 119, 132, 139, 208n46; didactic epic

- Roman love elegy (*continued*)
 distinguished from, 109–10, 115,
 118–19; as effeminate, 109–14;
 literary status of, 115–16, 118–19, 127–
 29, 210n77; male ego of, 207n24; as
 object of inquiry, 132–40; Ovid's
 response to critics of, 129–30;
 Ovid's vs. Propertius's lists of, 125–
 27; Sappho as symbol for, 126;
 studies of, 138. *See also* love poets
- Romulus, 66
- Rosenmeyer, Patricia A., 203n32,
 203n34
- Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 12
- Rousselle, Aline, 215n35
- Rudd, Niall, 210n77
- Sabine women, 215n40
- Salzman-Mitchell, Patricia, 4, 8, 104
- sameness: difference linked to, 49, 67–
 68; feminine otherness juxtaposed
 to masculine, 196–97n2; loss of,
 68–73, 196n59; in marriage, 79–82;
 meaning of life devoid of idea of,
 54–55; of men and gods, 56–59; of
 men and world, 59–63; unadorned
 bodies and, 83–86; woman's
 disruption of, 48–50. *See also*
 difference; Other and otherness
- Sappho: Alcaeus distinguished from,
 208n47; Catullus's relationship
 with, 126; as exemplar of female
 writing and reading, 5; on Helen of
 Troy, 218n19; *lascivia* of, 120–23, 126,
 129; name of, 123–24, 127; nuptial
 poem of, 157–58; Ovid influenced
 by, 114–15, 119–20; in Ovid's
 catalogue of authors, 114, 117, 118;
 as role model, 120, 210n75; Socratic
 portrayal of, 124–25
- seeing and vision: blinding lightning
 vs. bright light for, 44; foreseeing
 identified with, 34; Pandora as
 foundational myth for, 41–42;
 Pandora's gift of enlightenment in,
 46–47
- Segal, Charles, 172, 219n21, 219n35,
 220n37
- Semonides of Amorgos, 192n1,
 216n46
- Seneca the Elder, 210n76
- Seneca the Younger, 210n77, 212n19
- sexuality: in classical canon, 201n2;
 femininity and visibility linked to,
 29–31; handbooks of, 209n63;
 marriage as legitimizing, 83–86;
 motherhood vs., 21–22; search for
 twins and, 71–72; three types of,
 68–73
- Sharrock, Alison: on intratextuality, 11;
 on Ovid's ideal reader, 128; on
 Ovid's love elegy, 206n14; on Ovid's
 Pygmalion narrative, 206n19; on
 seduction and readers, 212n6; on
 strategy of releasing, 4
- silence and silencing: as hiding deceit,
 149–50; of Penelope, 106–7; of
 Perses, 78; rape as, of woman's
 desire, 154; rationality and, 131; of
 women, idealized, 103, 105, 150–51;
 writing like a woman as, 120
- Silenus, 101
- Silver Age, 59
- slave voices, 107–8, 121
- Socrates of Plato: Aspasia's funerary
 speech by, 203n27; beauty and,
 90–96, 99–100; body of, 98–99, 125,
 204n46, 205n49; death of, 179–80,
 182–86; Diotima and, 123–24;
 duality of, 97–98; on *eros*, 68,
 100–102; feminine persona of, 123;
 genealogy of, 101; *logoi* of, 102; on
 myth's value, 7; palinode and, 132;
 Pandora linked to, 101–2; on proper

- heroes, 177–78; weaving metaphor of, 161–62; on wonder, 41–42
 Socrates of Xenophon, 203–4n36, 209n67
 Socratic Pandora, 76–77, 96–98
 Sophocles, 117
sophrosyne (self-moderation), 80
 Spentzou, Efrossini, 8
 Statius, 200n28
 Steiner, George, 196n1
 Stesichorus, 132
 Stewart, Andrew, 84
 structuralism, reading Pandora in context of, 19–20
 symbiosis: end of, 73–75; of men and gods, 56–59; of men and world, 59–63
Symposium (Plato): Diotima in, 90, 144; on *eros*, 68–73, 74, 77; Eros in, 100–102; exclusions in, 183–84; masculine creation concept in, 123; Pandora's significance in, 102; on shame, 185; Socrates in, 97–102
tabula rasa, 79, 80, 201n6
 Tarrant, Richard, 208n38
 Tartaros, 24, 25, 40, 43
 tears and crying: exclusion of, 177–79, 182–86; as feminine response, 170–73; of Jean Valjean (*Les Misérables*), 220n36; of Odysseus, 173–76; of Patroclus, 219n34; weaving linked to, 164–65
 Telemachos: Penelope's conflict with, 106–7; Penelope's response compared with, 170–73
 temporality: demise of Golden Age and, 56–57; of divine vs. human poetry, 52–53, 198n16; Pandora's invocation of, 18; of transformative, cyclical narrative, 143–45
tener, 110, 206n15
 text: author's bodily presence in, 170; feminine linked to, 109–14, 187–89; as lascivious, 125–30; meanings of, 76; narrative options in, 142–45; Pandora's presence as essential to, 10–13, 189; picture vs., 217–18n15, 218n18; Plato's definition of, 102; sensual dimension of, x; subjectivity linked to, 142
 textile: language linked to, 161–62; text linked to, 162–65. *See also* weaving
 textuality: feminine attributes of, 114, 127; femininity and body linked to, 162–65, 170; feminist questions of, 8; gender's intersection with, 109–14, 187–89; otherness and, 76; Pandora's duality as sign of, 102. *See also* palinodic structure
textum, 161–62
thauma idesthai (wonder to see), 41–42. *See also* wonder
 Thaumatas, 41–42
 Theaetetus, 99–100
Thebaid (Statius), 200n28
theeton, 44–45
 Theodorus, 99–100
 Theodote: appearance of, 91–92, 203n32; meanings of name, 203n29; self-representation of, 203n34; Socrates' encounter with, 90–96
Theogony (Hesiod): as concealed eulogy of feminine, 31; as cosmological epic, 20, 39–40; divine genealogies in, 24–25, 31–32, 58; Eros in, 24–31; evil signified in, 33–36; *homoios* used in, 54–55; illumination in, 41–42; Muses' role in, 44–45, 50–52, 54, 162, 198n14; Pandora's place in center of, 17–19, 23, 37–38; structural break in, 195n40; truth and falsehood in, 51–52; wonder in, 42–47; *Works and*

Theogony (Hesiod) (*continued*)

- Days* compared with, 49–50, 54–56, 198n16. *See also* Hesiodic Pandora
- Tibullus: feminine inspiration for, 109;
Ovid on, 110; in Ovid's catalogue of authors, 114, 117, 118; Sappho and, 126
- Titans, 25–26, 38, 44
- tragedy and tragic tradition:
Aristotle's *Poetics* and, 211n3; love narrative in, 143; Ovid's catalogue of authors and, 116–18
- truth and falsehood: ambiguities of, 51–52; Hesiod's view of, 51–52; in love relationship, 148–50; of natural/naked vs. artifact/clothed woman, 83–85; Ovid's view of, 136–37, 146–50; Socrates' duality and, 97–98, 102
- tuche* (luck), 95
- twins: myths about, 65–68; sexuality and search for, 71–72
- Tyndareus, sons of, 66
- Typhoeus, 38, 43–44
- Uranos, 25–27, 28, 38
- Ur-Sprache* myth, 196n1
- Utopia, 198–99n17
- Varro, 114, 117, 118, 125
- Venus, 130. *See also* Aphrodite
- Vernant, Jean-Pierre, 10, 19–20, 199n18
- Veyne, Paul, 138, 206n19, 212n15
- Virgil, 114, 117, 118–19, 139, 216n7
- virgins: ambiguity of, 214n27; apple as symbol of, 158; Greek expectations for, 147; marriage anxieties of, 154–55; rape of, 149–60; separation from mothers, 157–58. *See also* nymphs
- visibility: active dimension of, 89; in cosmological development, 29–30; in creation accounts, 39–40; femininity and sexuality linked to, 29–31; implications of, 23–24; naming linked to, 36; in Ovid's love guides, 135–37; Pandora's diadem and power of, 37, 42–43; transcendence implied in, 89–90
- voice: illegitimate, 103–5, 107–8; transgressive hearing of, 54; as visual icon, 43–44. *See also* feminine voice (*vox feminina*)
- Warner, Marina, 10
- weaving: of Helen, 6; of ideal wife, 79–80; kinds of (plain vs. representational), 165–68, 217–18n15; of Pandora, 79–80, 88, 161; undoing and reweaving of, 181, 216n7
- weaving metaphor: Cicero, 216n7; Homer, 6, 162, 166–68, 170, 217–18n15; Ovid, 162–65; Plato, 216n2; rhetoric and, 103–4; Socrates, 161–62; Virgil, 216n7
- webs, 167, 180–81
- West, M. L., 39, 192n3, 193n23
- Williams, Gordon, 213n20
- Winkler, Jack, 5
- woman as object: of male desire, ix, 157–60; Pandora as experience of, 36; Theodote as, 92–96
- woman/women: archetypal biography of, 160; as beauty and as evil, 8–9; as danger, 103–4; as deceptive seducer and as virginal bride, 77; Freudian question about, 150–51; ideal type of, 77–81, 103, 105, 150–51, 165–66, 202n12, 217–18n15; as image and copy, 22–23; listening as, 170–73; lover of, norms broken by, 129; married, as ideal readers, 128–29; natural/naked vs. artifact/clothed, 81–86; Odysseus as, 173–76; as opaque and deceitful, 146–50;

- origin of race of, 36; Propertius as, 113–14; rape and psychic development of, 157–58; as reader in love relationship, 134–35; Sappho as role model for, 210n75; of sea (Semonides), 216n46; as separating gods from men, 197n4; writing and reading poetry as, 5. *See also* feminine; Other and otherness
- wonder: blinding lightning vs. bright light in, 44; of Pandora's dadem, 37, 42–43; recurrent uses of, 36–37; role in philosophy, 41–42; of Socrates' appearance, 97–99
- Works and Days* (Hesiod): Aphrodite's role in, 194n32; audience of, 78; awakening human senses in, 196n55; censure of protagonists and, 97; context of writing, 50; dressed woman in, 86; fraternal relationships in, 64–68; goals of, 20, 55, 73; on ideal wife, 77–78; on learning about Other, 73–75; naked maiden in, 85–86; Pandora's significance in, 17–19, 76–77; poetic authority in, 54–56; on relationship between men and world, 58, 59–63; skepticism about Five Ages in, 56–57; textual tensions in, 76–77; *Theogony* compared with, 49–50, 54–56, 198n16. *See also* Hesiodic Pandora
- Wyke, Maria, 112, 206n18, 207n24, 207n34
- Xanthippe, 179–80, 182–85
- xeinos* (guest-friend), 64
- Xenophon: alter ego of, 81, 202n15; educational program of, 79–81; influences on, 77; on relationship among arts, 91–93; *WORKS: Memorabilia*, 90–96, 203n31, 209n67; *Oeconomicus*, 77, 79–86. *See also* Socrates of Xenophon
- Zeitlin, Froma, 21–22, 196n52, 205nn4–5
- Zeus: blinding lightning of, 44, 45; hegemony of, 37–38, 56, 69, 154, 200n38; Muses' singing for, 53; Pandora's creation and, 33, 37, 86–88, 194–95n36; Prometheus's relationship with, 17, 31–32, 38; rapes by, 152–53, 155–57; sons of, 65–66; Typhoeus's challenges to, 43–44

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